"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES."—Rig-Veda

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Message of the East

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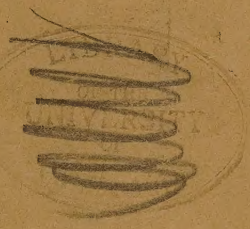

JANUARY, 1923

MASTERY OF SELF

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Soul's Secret Door

By

Swami Paramananda

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—*The Bookseller and Stationer*

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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THE MARCH OF LIFE

By Swami Paramananda

NWARD, ever forward in the march
of life,
My soul, onward, ever forward
March on!
Perchance the flame of thy life burns dim
Or flickers in the wind of this world.
Fear not its extinction.
Hold fast with all thy faith.
No power in gale or storm,
Nay, naught in heaven or earth,
Can rob thee of thine immortal flame.
It is assigned thee by Eternal Hand.
It is thine forever, at all times
With no beginning or end.
When thy feet are tired, rest them.
If mind is weary, refresh it.
Pause awhile in the still peace of thy
inmost cave;
Then rise again with renewed spirit of faith,
hope and courage.
Onward, ever forward in the march of life,
Ever onward, ever forward, my soul,
March on! March on!

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

There is no king like him who is king of himself.

—*St. Cadoc.*

When the fruit grows the petals drop off of themselves. So when Divinity in thee increases, the weakness of humanity in thee will vanish.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

Out of love and hatred, out of earnings, and borrowings, and lendings, and losses; out of sickness and pain; out of wooing and worshipping; out of travelling, and voting, and watching, and caring; out of disgrace and contempt, comes our tuition in the serene and beautiful laws. Let him not slur his lesson; let him learn it by heart. Let him endeavor exactly, bravely, and cheerfully, to solve the problem of that life which is set before him.—*Emerson.*

To bear what you think you cannot bear is really to bear.—*Ancient Japanese Saying.*

A vexation arises, and our expressions of impatience hinder others from taking it patiently. Disappointment, ailment, or even weather depresses us; and our look or tone of depression hinders others from maintaining a cheerful and thankful spirit. We say an unkind thing, and another is hindered in learning the holy lesson of charity that thinketh no evil. We say a provoking thing, and our sister or brother is hindered in that day's effort to be meek. How sadly, too, we may hinder without word or act! For wrong feeling is more infectious than wrong doing; especially the various phases of ill temper,—gloominess, touchiness, discontent, irritability,—do we not know how catching these are?—*F. R. Havergal.*

The Absolute Beauty is the Divine Majesty endued with the attributes of power and bounty. Every beauty and per-

fection manifested in the theatre of the various grades of beings is a ray of His perfect beauty reflected therein. It is from these rays that exalted souls have received their impress of beauty and their quality of perfection. Whosoever is wise derives his wisdom from Divine wisdom.—*Jami* (*Sufi*).

My dear Simmias, I fear that virtue is not really to be bought in this way, by bartering pleasure for pleasure, and pain for pain, and fear for fear, and the greater for the less, like coins. There is only one sterling coin for which all these things ought to be exchanged, and that is wisdom. All that is bought and sold for this and with this, whether courage, or temperance, or justice, is real: in one word true virtue cannot be without wisdom, and it matters nothing whether pleasure, and fear, and all other such things, are present or absent. But I think that the virtue which is composed of pleasures and fears bartered with one another, and severed from wisdom, is only a shadow of true virtue, and that it has no freedom, nor health, nor truth.—*Plato.*

The Yogi's ideal is freedom from nature. Conquest of nature is his standard of work. The Yogi says that all power is in the soul, and by the controlling of the mind and body one conquers nature by the power of the soul.

He is free, he is great, who turns his back upon the world, who has renounced everything, who has controlled his passion, and who thirsts for peace. One may gain political and social independence, but if he is a slave to his passions and desires, he cannot feel the pure joy of real freedom.—*Swami Vivekananda.*

Man is born upright. If he cease to be so and live, he is lucky to escape.

The highest goodness is to hold fast to the golden mean.

Waste begets self-will, thrift begets meanness; but better be mean than self-willed.

A superior man is calm and large of spirit, the vulgar are always fretting.—*Sayings of Confucius.*

Whose discrimination is stolen away by the love of power and pleasure and who are thus deeply attached therein, for such people it is impossible to obtain either firm conviction of purpose or God-consciousness.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

THREEFOLD WISDOM

From the Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad.

The threefold descendants of Prajapati,—Devas, men and Asuras—dwelt as Brahmacharins (students) with their father Prajapati. Having finished their studentship the Devas said: "Tell us something, Sir." He told them the syllable *Da.* Then he said: "Did you understand?" They said: "We did understand. You told us *'Damyata,'* Be subdued." "Yes," he said, "you have understood."

Then the men said to him: "Tell us something, Sir." He told them the same syllable *Da.* Then he said: "Did you understand?" They said: "We did understand. You told us *'Datta,'* Give." "Yes," he said, "you have understood."

Then the Asuras said to him: "Tell us something, Sir." He told them the same syllable *Da.* Then he said: "Did you understand?" They said: "We did understand. You told us *'Dayadham,'* Be merciful." "Yes", he said, "you have understood."

The divine voice of thunder repeats the same: *Da Da Da,* that is, Be subdued, Give, Be merciful. Therefore let that triad be taught, Subduing, Giving, and Mercy.

MASTERY OF SELF

By Swami Paramananda

The thirst for happiness is a common instinct in all mankind; but every one of us does not possess the secret of acquiring it, nor have we the power to retain it when it comes to us. This requires both wisdom and endurance. Perhaps for this reason the great men of all countries and ages have laid such tremendous emphasis on a life of self-discipline and self-control. Self-discipline enables us to organize and unite all our scattered forces. This necessarily increases our power for both thought and action. It is not true, though it appears to be so, that we have many isolated factors in our life. The same energy which pulsates through our heart and brain also operates our hands and feet; therefore learning to collect and control this inherent energy which now we fritter away through lack of co-ordination and co-operation would mean the greatest asset in our life.

Self-mastery is a far greater possession than the possession of all earthly goods. If we do not possess ourselves we may possess all the fine things of life and be unable to use them to any advantage. More than that, we may unconsciously strike at the very root of our life. Often in a sudden impulse of anger we destroy a finer part of ourself; in a moment we lose something that may take long to build up again. When a person is under the influence of hatred or any other violent emotion he may do something which he will always regret. If you ask him why he did it, he will say that he could not help it, that it was done before he knew it, in a flash of impulse. But why should such an impulse rise at all? It comes because we lay the foundation for it. It is not through chance that we fall under the sway of all these evils; but it is directly due to our long-standing habits of thinking and living. It is we who make it possible for these detri-

mental influences to rise in us, also it is in our power to make it impossible. If we reflect and penetrate into the depths of our being, we shall never fail to find that every event in our life is based on a just cause. If a man does something destructive to himself or to another it is because of his careless way of living and thinking. He has allowed destructive thought to over-power him; he is no longer himself. When he loses mastery of himself he may do something in a moment which may mean the undoing of all that he has done before.

In the great Indian spiritual classic, the Bhagavad-Gita, the Lord of Wisdom tells us: "Let a man raise himself by his Self, let him never lower himself; for he alone is the friend of himself, and he alone is the enemy of himself. He who has conquered himself by the Self, he is the friend of himself, but he whose self is unconquered, his self acts as his own enemy like an external foe." But who, you may ask, would knowingly be his own enemy? Whenever we start to do anything with dejected mind, or carry any evil impulse in our heart, do we not act as our own enemy? We know ethically and intellectually the bad effect these have upon our moral and physical being, and yet we stagger on carrying a load which exhausts us. How can we explain it, that an intelligent person should allow his mind to be filled with detrimental thoughts and feelings?

We become our own enemy when we are thrown out of balance by anger, hatred, grief or any intense emotion. We are for the time being obsessed by something alien. Anger is such an obsession. It is a very ugly thing in life. It disfigures a person. One who is pleasant and lovable suddenly becomes so distorted by anger that even if you try you can no longer find any trace of beauty in his face. Yet the whole of us is not obsessed. We are like two persons,—the person

who is angry and the person who is not. There is a dual principle in us. One part of us aspires for the highest, best, purest and finest; the other is earth-bound, weighted down by material concerns. Whether we want to or not, until we have gained full possession of our being, we will often go against ourselves. The Self is the friend of self for him who has conquered himself—his lower self—and one whose self is unconquered, his self acts as an enemy.

Of course we blame others. There is hardly a soul who does not blame somebody else for his misfortune, his failure. But the eye of wisdom reveals to us that instead of trying to lay the blame on others we should find the cause in our own life,—in the self. This self-adjustment and self-possession is most essential to our well-being.

In the Gita there is another passage which runs: "Lust, anger and greed, these three are the soul-destroying gates of hell. Therefore one should forsake these three." When we analyze them we find there is very little distinction between them. A greedy person longing for some object of desire with all the lust of his soul, becomes angry if he cannot have his way. Anger brings self-delusion. The cause of it and of all these things is ignorance. Sometimes we think that when we are excitable and angry we are exhibiting strength. It is the weak person who yields to these things. A weak person is more unforgiving than a strong one. I have seen it among athletes. The strongest athletes are those who can best endure insults from an inferior. He who is nervously disorganized naturally has less endurance. We cannot sever our spiritual evolution from our mental and physical. What we manifest in body and mind are the results of what we are in our spiritual consciousness. They are absolutely inseparable. Happiness is something that we have within us and if we have it there no matter what obstacles

are placed before us, we surmount them. We become truly our own friend. The Roman philosopher, Marcus Aurelius puts this very strongly,—"Be cheerful also, and seek not external help nor the tranquillity which others give. A man must stand erect, not be kept erect by others." He who possesses himself wholly may be confined in a dungeon, or he may be forced into crowds alien to his temperament, and yet he will maintain himself. In the midst of all dual conditions—heat and cold, pleasure and pain, noise and stillness, he will carry with him the realization of his higher Self.

We cannot expect, if we follow the trend of life, to have everything made smooth for us. I have great doubt in my mind whether it would be really good for any individual. We need discipline, and the discipline of life is a very wonderful one. Mastery is not for those who are always trying to shirk and shun everything that is disagreeable. If we keep on avoiding what is difficult we shall never go one step forward. It is this which awakens within us our inner faculties. That is the reason theoretical knowledge and actual experience are two different things altogether. We may know theoretically that wherever the mind dwells, according to that will be our knowledge, our strength and our success; but we have to know how to manipulate the mind, how to hold it, how to possess it. Here is where we must be practical.

We pray, we meditate, we study, we do all kinds of things which we think should give us spiritual impetus, and yet we stay still almost, or take a backward step. Why is this? A man may use high-sounding words expressing moral ideas but if he lacks in the fundamental principle of life, if he lacks in patience, forbearance, forgiveness, he will burst out into anger some day and then all his dogmas and theories will go for nothing. That is the reason religion often becomes a noxious thing to some people. We are just like a man who

is pulling on his oars but can make no headway because he has not lifted the anchor. What we have heard, what we sometimes feel instinctively to be our own, we can only make our own through experiencing it. We may know that we have a higher Self and that it is our true friend, but in its light when we actually grasp its meaning and its application, the whole aspect of our life changes. We become bigger, stronger, more enduring. Endurance is one of the greatest assets in life. Those who do not know how to endure, break down under the pressure of circumstance. They have not yet learned the real art of life and living.

Realization is born of our own experience, is inseparable from us. In an emergency, in moments of great tragedy, the man of tranquillity, of serenity, of wisdom, remains stable while another man possessed of the knowledge that all the books can give, loses his control and his balance. Why does he lose it? Because he never had it. What is ingrained in our nature we are incapable of losing. We always carry our light with us—always. Plato declares a wise man will be as happy in a state of slavery as in a state of freedom. When we have absolutely transformed ourselves there is no question of calculation: shall I be angry or not, shall I speak harshly or shall I contain myself? These thoughts do not rise because in the heart of the holy there is no room left for any darkness; no possibility left for the uprise of anger or evil.

Spirituality is not a question of calculation. We either have it or we do not have it. It is not a question of doctrines or words or theories. It is something we evolve within us and after we have evolved it others benefit by it. Our life becomes transformed. We are the same and yet we are not the same. We have the same hands and feet, but they are put to better use; we have the same mind and heart but

they are filled with greater ideas and ideals. The only way we can rise, the only way we can lift our fellow-beings, is to find a higher level of consciousness. If we have a higher standard of life, if we possess self-control, if we are masters of ourselves, we cannot help but benefit those living around us. They may become impatient with us, intolerant that we are different from them, but if we try to walk in their ways we do not benefit them. If, however, we hold fast to our own ideals, they will turn to us in moments of distress. In time of storm, anger, impatience or great grief, one who is not molested by these things becomes like a rock, others cling to him and find their consolation.

This does not mean that we must grow unfeeling like a block of wood or a stone. It is not the person who is harsh and hard that is master. Unfeeling people are often self-centred and selfish. We must not confuse these ideas. It is rather one whose consciousness has become expanded, who instead of revolving round and round with the petty feelings of self and selfishness, suddenly comes into possession of another part of his life. He is infused with divine power and naturally is incapable of doing anything on a lower level.

This does not imply that we must crush every desire that rises in our mind, it would be like covering a fire with ashes, —the fire would still be there intact. We do not free ourselves from our lower propensities by this method, but by gaining greater knowledge, by gaining greater unity within ourselves. When our thought and mind and heart, when our whole being is focused in absolute unison, then shall we find high ideals rising within us, then the things that belong to the lower levels will touch us no more. It is not by satisfying our lower desires that we shall find any lull but rather by uniting them and making them harmonious with our higher purpose.

Self-realization means that our life is connected with its root, its source. One who is master over himself, no matter where he is placed, is always the victor. Therefore self-mastery is a necessity if we would enjoy in full measure all the blessings of life. Our blessings are now often carried away by our shortcomings. ' Many a person after his first failure settles down and says: I am not born equipped; it is not in my nature to do this. He has not even investigated his inner nature; he is judging only from the surface. If he would go deeper he would find that he has all the inherent powers and possibilities, more than he can possibly use. Let us remember our dual nature: faltering, failing, weak and unstable on the one side and on the other: majestic, potent, invincible. Self-depreciation means that we have no faith in a higher Spirit, we have no clear concept of our higher Self. That is the reason we run ourselves down. Egotism exists as much in the life of the poor and miserable as in the life of ostentation and pride. The balanced state of mind is what we need above all else, not merely in our spiritual life but in our life of every day. No teaching gives this middle path with so much force and practical wisdom as the Vedic revelation.

Sometimes people have the foolish notion that they cannot be spiritual unless they show a certain self-abasement. But the humility which is essential to spirituality is illustrated by the fruitful tree bending its boughs in fruition. A barren tree stands stiff and gives nothing. When our life becomes fruitful it cannot help but show forth gentleness, mellowness, beneficent qualities—no more room for harshness. A life which is unproductive always finds fault with others, always strikes a harsh note somewhere. That is why we should strive to unfold these principles within. It is so easy, —the same mind which is capable of thinking evil, hateful

thoughts also has infinite capacity for good and constructive thoughts. The same mind which is unwilling to practise high ideals also has the power to practise them and benefit by them. It is all a question of turning and directing the will. The will which is tormenting us and disregarding our lofty feelings and aspirations, can also be made to do what is nearest to our hearts.

One of the most beautiful thoughts that Buddha gave to his disciples was that a well-ordered mind will do greater good to us than a friend or a father or a mother or any one from outside. People who live on other people's opinions, do they ever accomplish anything? When you do something that you know is good, is beneficial, when you do it with your whole being, with unselfish spirit, whether others see it in the same way or not, it has given you joy and a sense of uplift. If we depend on praise and recognition we are done for. When our inner life is empty we cannot help but depend on the exterior, but after our inner life is filled we care less and less for all outer conditions. We are happier because of this, we create a happier atmosphere, an atmosphere of strength.

If we start one day with an exalted attitude of mind, with courage, consecration and fearlessness, and another day with depression, doubt or dissatisfaction and observe their effect upon our life, we shall realize very quickly why it is declared that we are our own friend and our own enemy. Through depression we not only drag ourselves down but we drag others down with us. A great teacher used to say that one who is melancholy has no right to touch another person's life. Life is not meant for sadness; we should not throw our burden on another. We cannot be self-indulgent. Some indulge themselves in unhappiness; they seem to love it. You pull them out of it and again they settle down. They have formed the habit of staying in that sphere and they alone

can rescue themselves from it. All the religions, all the high ideals cannot help them from without, till they have awakened themselves from within. That is the reason why the Gita says so forcibly, raise thyself by thine own Self—never lower thyself.

Even from the stand-point of self-preservation or personal happiness, we should cultivate mastery of self, because therein lies the secret, the strength, the fulfillment. If we do not have all that we desire, let us make the best use of what we have. The greatest artists are those who depend less and less on outer conditions. They have creative genius within themselves and with little material produce the best. It is not the material which makes the artist, it is the artist himself who shapes the material. If we bear this in mind we shall cease to complain, to find fault either with ourselves or our outer conditions. Whatever comes our way, let us use it. The efforts we are making now will bring us the highest; all they need is direction and fortification. That is what self-mastery means. Self-mastery gives us such wisdom that we may always under all circumstances, depend upon our own inward strength.

INVOCATION

To Kwannon, the Merciful Deity

(From the Japanese Work "Hokkekyo")

O Thou whose eyes are clear, whose eyes are kind, whose eyes are full of pity and sweetness,—O Thou Lovely One, with thy beautiful face, with thy beautiful eyes,—

O Thou Pure One, whose luminosity is without spot, whose knowledge is without shadow,—O Thou forever shining like that Sun whose glory no power may repel,—Thou Sun-like in the course of Thy mercy, pourest Light upon the world!

THE PHILOSOPHY OF HAPPINESS

Kaibara Ekken. Seventeenth Century.

(Japanese moralist. He uses "pleasure" throughout in the sense of "happiness.")

To be spiteful, to be haughty, to speak evil of others, to rebuke their small faults, to be provoked by their careless words, and to be angry at their rudeness, is not only to deprive yourself of pleasure; but is also to betray your own littleness to the world.

Suppress anger and selfish desires; be broad-minded and think no evil of others. By this way you can keep yourself calm and happy, for there is no discord which can then jar your harmonious spirit. Men in this world do many unworthy deeds. Do your best to lead the crooked into the true path. But if they neither listen, nor repair their ways, let them alone—they are fools, and to be pitied. With such even the sages could do nothing; do not allow yourself to be tormented by the stupidity of others.

One whose heart is not here, sees and yet sees not. He may stand before a landscape radiant with beauty and charm yet sees it not. For such a one the spring has no glory, the autumn no beauty. His heart remains unmoved at the sight of moon and flowers. Sitting before the open books of the sages, he reads them not. Endeavoring to satisfy his selfish desires, he leaves the pure pleasures behind, and lives a life distressing both to himself and others. How sad it is to permit a short life to slip away in the performing of naught but despicable deeds!

The poor man who is foolish seeks pleasure and finds it not, because his heart is laden with envy and malice. The rich man who is foolish seeks pleasure in the spending of his treasure; but being idle, extravagant, and covetous, fails to

find it. Pleasure cannot be ours as long as we wander from the true path of mankind. In your heart, therefore, seek the true path, and then pleasure shall be added.

If we make our heart the fountain-head of pleasure, our eyes and ears the gates of pleasure, and keep away base desires, then our pleasure shall be plentiful; for we can become the masters of mountains, water, moon and flowers. We do not need to ask any man for them, neither to obtain them need we pay a single sen; they have no specified owner. Those who can enjoy the beauty in the Heavens above and the Earth beneath need not envy the luxury of the rich, for they are richer than the richest.

The pleasures of the vulgar pass away and bitterness remaineth instead, for they are harmful both to mind and body. But the pleasures of the wise are pure and food for the mind. From morning until night, without injury, may he enjoy them; for no one can hinder him, neither do his pleasures provoke the rebuke of the gods. He delights in the moon and the mountain, the flowers and water. With the wind he sings, while listening to the song of the birds. Simple pleasures such as these may be enjoyed by all, whether rich or poor. But the rich, because of their love for idleness and extravagance, may not obtain them so easily as do the poor.

The wise man knows contentment, because he is not covetous; he is rich in mind, though poor in worldly goods. There is an old saying, that the hearts of those who know contentment are rich: but the hearts of the foolish are poor because they know not contentment. To be content with simple things is to enjoy life. The older the man, the more content he should be in either his poverty or riches.

He who is his own friend, is a friend to all men.—*Seneca.*

Silence is a healing for all ailments.—*Jewish Proverb.*

THE MEDICINE OF WISDOM

From the Mahabharata

The body of a creature is called the car. The living principle is the driver of that car. The senses are said to be the steeds, our acts and the understanding are the traces. He who followeth after these running steeds has to come repeatedly to this world in a round of rebirths. He, however, who being self-restrained, restrains them by his understanding, hath not to come back.

The man, O King, who has restrained his senses and subdued wrath and covetousness, who is contented, and truthful in speech, succeeds in obtaining peace. The loss of kingdom, of friends and of children, O Bharata, and such as these, overtake him who is still under the influence of desire.

He that is wise should apply the medicine of intelligence to all great griefs. Indeed, obtaining the medicine of wisdom which is truly very efficacious and is almost unattainable, the man of restrained soul would kill that serious disease called sorrow.

Neither prowess, nor wealth, nor friends, nor well-wishers, can cure a man of his grief so effectually as the self-restrained soul. Self-restraint, renunciation and heedfulness are the three steeds of *Brahman.*

He who rides on the car of his soul, unto which are yoked these steeds with the aid of traces furnished by good conduct, and drives it, casting off all fear of death, proceedeth, O King, to the region of *Brahman.*

That person, O monarch, who gives unto all creatures an assurance of his harmlessness, goes to the highest regions. The fruit that one obtains by giving an assurance unto all creatures of his harmlessness cannot be obtained by a thousand sacrifices or by daily fasts.

Amongst all things there is certainly nothing dearer than self. Death is certainly disliked by all creatures, O Bharata! Therefore compassion should certainly be shown unto all.

Endued with diverse kinds of errors, entangled by the net of their own intelligence, they that are wicked and are of good vision, wander repeatedly on the earth. They, however, that are wise and endued with subtile sight, attain to a union with *Brahman.*

SURRENDER

Extract from letters of Swami Turiyananda

With love at heart and sincere prayers to the Lord, the spiritual aspirant has to wait for nothing else. The Paramatman who knows the workings of everybody's heart arranges everything favourably for him. A modest attitude is a great help to self-improvement. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "Water accumulates in a low land, while it runs off from an elevation." All virtues flock to the modest man. Modesty is a wonderfully desirable thing. Go on doing your work to the best of your ability and knowledge, and never mind for the consequences. Lay them all at the feet of the Lord. He is made of goodness and will do nothing but good.

If one sets his mind on Him, has he to be afraid of going astray? Is He not the pole-star of our life? He is the Goal, He is the means, and He is the consequences. Its beginning, middle and end,—everything is He. There is no other refuge but Him. "When you lie down, think that you are prostrating yourself to the Mother; when you sleep, think you are meditating on Her; and while taking food consider you are offering an oblation to Mother. Whatever you catch through your ears is a Mantram of the Mother, for Mother is verily the whole alphabet and in every letter She resides. In glee does Ramprasad sing that the Divine Mother is in every being; and when you roam about in the streets think

that you are circumambulating the Mother." If one bears this in mind one has no more chances to slip. She is the All. . . . .

If I mistake not, you have expressed anguish at not being able to achieve anything yet in the way of realization, and have written also that your days are passing without joy. Why so? If you are really dispirited at not being able to realize God, rest assured that your auspicious moment is at hand. The more intensely you feel like that know, that the Lord's grace is approaching. But if any other desire lurking in the mind has created a sort of dullness, then try to remove it from the mind without delay, and never neglect it in the least. For know that to be the greatest obstacle in the path of spiritual realization. Always try to acquire fitness; then the Lord will be pleased and make you the recipient of all bliss.

Our chief duty is to lie in all humility at the Lord's door. If we can do that, His mercy is bound to come. Dullness of spirits will make room for surpassing joy. It would be the height of mercy on His part if He but allows me to lie submissively at His door; he who realizes this, undoubtedly receives His full grace without delay. Try to love Him with your whole mind and soul—why do you calculate your own joy or depression of spirits? Surrender yourself to Him and pray whole-heartedly that you may have the deep-rooted conviction ever alive in your heart that whatever condition He may put you in, it is for your welfare. Then everything will lead to good.

The perfect man shares the food of this earth, but the happiness of God. He does not incur trouble either from men or things. He does not join in censuring, in plotting, in toadying. Free from care he comes, and unconscious he goes; —this is the art of preserving life.—*Chuang Tzu.*

CONTEMPLATION

By Richard Rolle. Early Fourteenth Century.

(Known as the Hermit of Hampole and called the father of English mysticism.)

Contemplative life or contemplation has three parts: reading, prayer and meditation. In reading God speaks to us; in prayer we speak to God. In meditation angels come down to us and teach us that we err not; in prayer they go up and offer our prayers to God, joying in our profit; that are messengers betwixt God and us.

If it be asked what is contemplation it is hard to define. Some say that contemplative life is nought else but knowledge of things to come and hidden: or to be void of all worldly occupation: or the study of God's letters. Others say that contemplation is the free sight into the visioned truths of wisdom, lift up with full high marvel. Others say that contemplation is a free and wise insight of the soul all spread about to behold His might. Others say, and say well, that contemplation is joy in heavenly things. Others say, and say best, that contemplation is the death of fleshly desires through the joy of the mind up-raised.

To me it seems that contemplation is the joyful song of God's love taken into the mind, with the sweetness of angels' praise. This is the jubilation that is the end of perfect prayer and high devotion in this life. This is the ghostly mirth had in mind for the Everlasting Lover, with great voice out-breaking. This is the last and most perfect deed of all deeds in this life. Therefore the psalmist says: "Blest be the man who knows jubilation," in contemplation of God. Truly none alien to God can taste the sweetness of His love. But if he desires to be ever kindled with the fire of everlasting love, in patience, meekness, and gentle manners; and to be made fair with all cleanness of body and soul, and dight with ghostly ointments; he is lifted up into contemplation.

This is the manner for perfect men to keep: all worldly goods for God to despise, and yet to take of the same meat and clothing; and if this want at any time, not to murmur but to praise God; and as much as they may to refuse superfluities. The warmer a man waxes with the heat of everlasting light, the meeker shall he be in all adversities. He that is truly and not feignedly meek holds himself worthy of being despised, and neither by harm nor reproof is provoked to wrath. Wherefore lowing himself to continual meditation, it is given him to rise to the contemplation of heavenly things, and the sharpness of his mind being cleansed as the sickness of the flesh suffers, it is given him to sing sweetly and burningly with inward joys. And truly when he goes to seek any outward thing, he goes not with a proud foot, but only joying in high delights . . .

And in this truly is love perfect when man, going in the flesh, cannot be glad but in God, and wills or desires nothing but God or for God. Hereby it is shown that holiness is not in crying of the heart, or tears, or outward works, but in the sweetness of perfect charity and heavenly contemplation. Contemplative sweetness is not gotten but with full great labour; and with joy untold it is possessed. Forsooth it is not of man's merit but God's gift. And yet from the beginning to this day a man might never be ravished in contemplation of everlasting love unless he before had perfectly forsaken all the vanity of the world. Moreover he ought to be used in healthful meditation and devout prayer before he come truly to the contemplation of heavenly joys.

Contemplation is sweet and desirable labour. It gladdens the labourer, and hurts not. No man has this but in joying: not when it comes, but when it goes, he is weary. O good labour to which mortal men dress them. O noble and marvellous working that those sitting do most perfectly! It be-

hooves that he take great rest of body and mind whom the fire of the Holy Spirit truly enflames.

Nothing is more profitable, nothing merrier, than the grace of contemplation that lifts us from these low things and offers us to God. What is this grace but the beginning of joy? And what is the perfection of joy but grace confirmed? In which is kept for us a joyful happiness and happy joy, a glorious endlessness and everlasting joy; to live with the saints and dwell with angels. And that which is above all things: truly to know God; to love Him perfectly; and in the shining of His majesty to see Him and, with a wonderful song of joy and melody to praise Him endlessly.

To whom be worship and joy, with deeds of thankfulness, in the world of worlds. Amen.

LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

Since the appearance of Swami Paramananda's recent book of poems, we have received numerous appreciative letters from different sources. In order that we may share these with our friends, we are giving a few extracts from them.

Dr. John Haynes Holmes writes the Swami: "Your poems, 'Soul's Secret Door', are very beautiful. What a magic touch you Hindus have of majesty, repose and insight."

From Dr. and Mrs. Partridge, of New York, come these appreciative words: "After a first little peep, we settled ourselves to enjoy Swami's outpouring—first one reading aloud and then the other. The 'Dedication' itself is uplifting, attuning mind and heart through its simple, self-evident sincerity. As we read on and on, we were thrilled and humbled into an exalted mood. A lovely blossom, indeed, is each and every poem, with ample variety among which to make choice suited to the need of the moment! The collection as a whole

makes a wonderful garland most acceptable, we think, to Whom it is dedicated. It gives full evidence of the blissful sanctity of the mood attained when the Soul's Secret Door was opened by its author—and it inspires in the reader desire to open each for himself the same door. It must have been a treat, indeed, to hear Swami read his poems."

"I can scarcely close the 'Soul's Secret Door' long enough to tell you of my great joy in the possession of these exquisite poems. What a wonderful Christmas gift to the world." A. D., Louisville, Ky.

"I think that I was in a peculiarly receptive attitude of mind for the poems in their utter naturalness and simplicity struck home to my heart in a way that nothing I believe that I had read before had ever quite done for me. I love them all. The ones called 'Surrender' and 'Holy Waters' and also the one from which the book takes its name, I think, are my favorites. I shall prize your little book beyond measure and I thank you with all my heart for that which you have given me through it." N. M. H., Louisville, Ky.

"Swami's book came yesterday and I have found some lovely thoughts. The 'Wonder of Wonders' is one which is very beautiful, and also are 'Ego' and 'Freedom.' 'The Holy Lamp' impressed me as if it were the story of Swami's early struggle in Boston. Only a pure, lofty soul could write in such loving and sweet words, seeking to inspire us who are dwelling in more or less ignorance and darkness. I can imagine the pleasure of those privileged to hear him read the beautiful poems. They remind me of the Psalms, as they are written in somewhat of the same style. We enjoy Swami's beautiful poems and find much inspiration for thought and thankfulness to him for writing such a helpful book. It should be known from coast to coast." Mrs. E. C. Morgan, San Francisco.

"I am so very happy and grateful for your beautiful book, especially its pristine message of faith and freedom. Thank you heartily for letting me share this little volume, —fragrant as a May morning and sweet and poignant as night beneath June's moon! The poems—well I think that I like them the better because they are crowned with a simple genuineness and a frank and complete sharing of the beauty which you have caught from common, lovely 'pathway' things. For days I have been conscious of delicious lines that come back again and again to memory. Thank you indeed!" Prof. E. L. Baker, Kenyon College.

"From the bottom of my heart I thank you for the message it contains for me. In all my search for the Truth, never have I found such inspiration as when reading and re-reading any of the poems. It truly is a message from where words cannot reach. During the reading of the poems it has come to me that as we have learned, that when the Apostle Paul came to Athens and he saw the many temples dedicated to the different gods, and one of the temples dedicated to the Unknown God, he declared to them that the same gods whom you worship ignorantly, Him I declare unto you real and a living God, and this is what I feel the poems declare unto me, a real living God." W. H. Starick, Cincinnati.

"The more I read them the better I realize how full they are of the joy of spiritual life and the delight in nature as the boundless expression of the Infinite Love and Wisdom. There are certain lines which I find especially uplifting and impress me as wonderful material for meditation." Marion Foster Gilmore, Louisville.

"The book has arrived and to say I am pleased with it does not begin to express my feeling. The poems seem to grow in power and depth of wisdom at each reading." Mr. Morrison P. Helling, of the Home of Truth, Utica, N. Y.

REPORT

On Christmas Eve, as usual, The Vedanta Centre of Boston, became a centre of glowing light, the flickering candles in its windows sending out through the night something deeper than cheer—a sense of holiness and of serene joy which found tender expression in the little window altar with its smiling Mother and Child, its ruby vigil light, its star-like tapers and its garlands. Strangers were irresistibly drawn in to the Christmas Eve Service, members came from out of town, while two friends travelled from distant points just to spend Christmas at the Centre. As a result the Chapel was filled to over-flowing and for the first time many availed themselves of the Centre's Christmas blessing. Chapel and shrine, with their soft lights and their profusion of flowers, threw a spell of silence over all hearts. There were carols before and during the Service, the members of the household singing together.

Swami Paramananda, after reading some of his yet unpublished poems, spoke in simple and loving words of the spirit of Christmas. "There are moments," said the Swami in part, "when the soul sings and these are very precious moments. The soul only sings when it has found its real joy. The significance of Christmas or similar feasts which we have in all countries among all nations, is to my mind the song of the soul, when the spirit rejoices, when it sings aloud with a sense of triumph. And why? Because in the world of gloom and despair it suddenly realizes its divine heritage, —a spark, a light, that comes from the darkness, revealing all things, relating all things and making us feel our own true worth. To me, that is the real significance of Christmas or the birth of any great Saviour." During the last meditation, the Swami's own beautiful song of Dawn, the words and music of which came to him recently at sun-rise, was sung without accompaniment, a single voice carrying the melody, and the combined voices coming in on the refrain "It is Dawn, holy Dawn." Many who had not heard it before took it for an ancient carol and for all it was indeed "The call of the Awakener" for the New Year.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

FEBRUARY, 1923

Surrender and Spiritual Heroism

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—*The Bookseller and Stationer, N. Y.*

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Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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PRAYER

O THOU eternal, all-compassionate Spirit, our lack of love hinders our access to Thee.

Do Thou lift our hearts from the mire of delusion that we may rejoice in Thy Presence.

Grant that we may learn to be firm and strong and selfless in Thy service, never losing the vision that Thou art the Doer and we are only instruments in Thy hands.

Help us to surrender our little will to Thine and to be wholly consecrated to Thee.

Thou art the Giver of all strength, give us undying spiritual strength.

Thou art the Giver of all inspiration, give us high and holy inspiration.

Thou art the Giver of all light, illumine our hearts with Thy divine radiance that our darkness and ignorance may vanish.

Thou art the Giver of all blessedness, fill our life with blessing and noble aspiration.

Thou art the Giver and Thou art the Gift; grant unto us the power to receive Thy gift.

Do Thou ever protect us and guide us by Thy compassionate hand.

Make our steps steadfast and unfaltering.
Teach us how to follow Thy holy path with unwavering faith and undaunted courage;
Though many times we fail and stumble, still may we never doubt Thy loving care.
Free us from all selfishness and egotism that we may live happily, loving even those who do not bear love towards us.
Thou art our tender Mother and protecting Father,
Thou art our Friend, Companion and Spiritual Guide.
Do Thou reveal unto us Thy abiding Presence that we may learn to surrender with wholeness of devotion and fulfill Thy Will through our life and actions.
We pray unto Thee to bless and sustain us and bestow upon us Thy divine peace. —*Swami Paramananda.*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Take refuge in Him with all thy heart; through His grace thou shalt attain Supreme Peace and the Eternal Abode.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

O Lord, give what Thou wilt, and how much Thou wilt, and when Thou wilt. Deal with me as Thou thinkest good. Set me where Thou wilt, and deal with me in all things just as Thou wilt. Behold, I am Thy servant, prepared for all things: for I desire not to live unto myself, but unto Thee; and oh, that I could do it worthily and perfectly!—*Thomas a Kempis.*

Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust.
—*Psalms.*

In the prayer of rapture man is effaced from self, so that he is not conscious of his body, nor of things outward

and inward. From these he is rapt, journeying first to his Lord, then in his Lord. If it occur to him that he is effaced from self it is a defect. The highest state is to be effaced from effacement.—*Ghazzali.*

Have I ever been restrained from what I willed? Or compelled against my will? Indeed how is this possible? I have ranged my pursuits under the direction of God. Is it His will that I should have a fever? It is my will too. Is it His will that I should pursue anything? It is my will too. Is it His will that I should obtain anything? It is my will too. Is it His will that I should be tortured? Then it is my will to be tortured. Is it His will that I should die? Then it is my will to die.—*Epictetus.*

Let us throw self aside; no more self-interest, and then God's will, unfolding every moment in everything, will console us also every moment for all that He shall do around us or within us for our discipline.—*Fenelon.*

The Tathagata teaches a complete surrender of self, but he does not teach a surrender to those powers that are evil, be they men or gods or the elements of nature. Struggle must be for all life is struggle of some kind. But he that struggles should look to it lest he struggle in the interest of self against truth and righteousness.—*Buddha.*

Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

—*Proverbs.*

If one acquires the conviction that everything is done by God's Will, that one is only the tool in the hands of God, then is one free even in this life.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

When the mind thinks nothing, when the soul covets nothing, and the body acteth nothing that is contrary to the will of God, this is perfect sanctification.—*Anonymous.*

SURRENDER

By Swami Paramananda

In spiritual life the surrender of self-will plays a most vital part, yet this abnegation to some higher power than our own should not be confounded with self-immolation. In fact spiritual surrender is just the opposite of what is understood in the world by surrender. In material life after we have exhausted all other resources, after every effort has failed and there is nothing more left for us to do, we begin to think about surrendering to God. It is forced upon us; we have no other alternative. In spiritual life it is quite the contrary. When we feel the dawning of a new consciousness, we realize that our physical life should depend upon its spiritual Source. This awakens in us a sense of higher power within—a power so vibrant and majestic that we surrender before it with gladness of heart. It is not through a sense of helplessness or defeat that we turn to this Supreme Source, but with the realization that finite should always seek its support in the Infinite. Herein lies the fullness of our strength and our unfailing security.

Surrender is never accomplished through mental calculation. It is the spontaneous feeling of our heart. It comes when we know, when we feel, that there is nothing more trustworthy, nothing more secure, nothing more wise or more competent than the Supreme. Saintly characters do not take their destiny in their own hands. They depend rather on the will of God. They do not ask for anything even in their prayers; they accept joyfully whatever comes through the divine Will. This requires great strength, faith and spiritual insight. We cannot expect to gain this all at once. The majority of us have been brought up with a very different idea; our education, sur-

roundings and atmosphere have been the very opposite of surrender. It is our ego that is dominant. Yet even when we do not have the spirit of complete surrender, we should try as much as possible to connect ourselves with the Infinite Source.

Our egotistic sense plays a treacherous and very unhealthy part in our life. It holds out so much promise and it gives so little! In its self-importance it wants to take the place of the Lord. When we have even a little flash of spiritual wisdom we come to see how unwise it is to depend upon the mundane and the fleeting. Our understanding grows deeper and we learn to surrender, not only sometimes but at all times,—in happiness and misery, in success and failure. We strive, not to suit our own convenience, but to adjust our life to the divine order. A real lover of truth, a devotee, takes everything in this light. He would rather have poverty with the Will of God than riches without His Will. We must never lose sight of this goal.

It is a beautiful thing to be able to feel and know that we are in God's hands. Whether our life is of apparent insignificance or of great importance, it is equally in His hands. These relative matters do not count; what counts is this deeper aspect wherein we feel our spiritual existence. Love of God is not confined to any station in life; it has nothing to do with riches or with poverty; it requires sincerity, purity of heart, guilelessness, and these are every man's natural heritage. He who possesses these qualities, his life is always pointed towards God. When misfortune thwarts him, he accepts it with thanksgiving; when good fortune shines upon him, he takes it as a blessing.

Sri Ramakrishna gives the parable of a poor working

man who was also a great devotee. Every evening when his work was done his custom was to sit alone in the outer court of his house and chant the Name of the Lord. It was his only recreation and his source of re-creation. One night as he was doing this he became so absorbed in the companionship of the Holy Presence that he lost all sense of time. The hour grew late and a band of robbers who were passing seized him and forced him to carry their loot for them. As they were robbing a house, they were surrounded, but they all escaped, all except the poor devotee.

When he was brought before the judge, the whole community protested; they said that he was a holy man, incapable of doing such an act. Finally the judge questioned him and the man replied: "Through the Lord's Will I ate my supper and through the Lord's Will I was resting and through the Lord's Will I was repeating a holy chant. Through the Lord's Will it was a late hour, and through the Lord's Will some thieves were passing and seized me. Through the Lord's Will I was arrested and through the Lord's Will I have been brought before you." One who has the right feeling of surrender never forgets.

"Thy Will be done!" Many among us can easily repeat these beautiful words. It is a saying which runs through almost all religions; but it is much easier to repeat than to put into practice. At first we are afraid that we may lose our individual independent action by surrender; but when we realize the infinitude of God, it is out of fullness and gladness and great wisdom that we fasten our heart, our whole being, to that One. There was once a mystic who said: When will that blessed day come when I shall be imprisoned hand and foot, heart and mind and brain? When will that blessed hour come when I shall

wholly lose my freedom? It may seem very confusing to the average mind that any one should want to be so imprisoned to the Will of God that he no longer has any independent will of his own.

How often in the life of Christ it was asked of Him why He did not save Himself, He Who was so great. "He saved others, himself he cannot save." He never wished it otherwise. Was not His constant prayer,—Thy Will be done in all things? Is it not the prayer of all great souls,—the height of spiritual realization? It does not mean asking only for that which seems to us to be good. Our vision is not far-reaching; we often blunder. Even apparent good may prove neither good nor permanent. Therefore the devotee puts aside his self-will and prays that God's Will may work through him, through his body, his mind, his heart, his soul; and this is called surrender. There is no difference between the wise man who knows his Self to be united with God, and says "I am He; I and my Father are one"; and the other wise man who says, "Not I, not I! Let Thy Will be done in all things! Not I, but Thou!" They have both transcended the limitations of name and form and self-will and have found their refuge in that unbounded Spirit. They are both surrendered before the one omniscient Will. They voice the same experience in two different utterances. He who says, "I am He" does not mean this flesh, this little personality, but That which permeates and pervades the whole; while the other who says: "Not I! Thou art all!" has become so filled with the Presence of God that he surrenders awe-stricken before the Infinitude of Deity.

But this inner life is shut to most people,—a closed book. There are some who think that they can grasp the theme of God intellectually and prove the existence

of Divinity through a series of arguments. That is not practical in the realm of spiritual reality. On the contrary these processes often drive us further away from our goal. It is rather the inner vision that we need in order to get free from the turbulence of the world. To gain this clear vision, we must cultivate steadfast devotion to our ideal. Devotion, prayer, meditation,— these practices which are inseparable from the spiritual life are the means by which we gain it. Spiritual life should always unfold itself with freshness of feeling. We may take inspiration from all sources, but no matter wherefrom it comes, we must give it spontaneous expression through our thought, word and action.

There are people who live in only one thought:—to realize God, to express spiritual beauty through their life and consciousness. In India to-day you will find hundreds of men and women who go about without any thought for themselves because their supreme faith is fastened, not on their muscles or their material revenue, but on God. They know that whatever comes, they will be taken care of. It is most wonderful, that when a man can express this feeling of perfect surrender, no evil can come to him. He has given a death-blow to evil. It is our calculation, our lack of faith, our doubt of ourselves, and of truth which open avenues for ailments and imperfections. When we rely on the spirit of God with absolute firmness and conviction, then when the unexpected comes, even if it is not pleasing to us, it will make no difference. If our surrender is complete we shall not be thwarted or unnerved, but if it is merely a theory, we cannot help but be overthrown by every difficulty.

I know through my own experience as well as from what I have seen in the lives of holy men, that the spirit

of surrender is the greatest treasure one can procure for oneself and for humanity. We do not ask to be protected and yet we are eternally protected; we do not ask for anything for ourselves and yet the supply is so inexhaustible that it fills our life till it overflows and gives abundantly to others.

DEPENDENCE ON GOD

By St. Catherine of Siena

A soul that loves God perfectly ends by forgetting herself and all other creatures. Such a soul, seeing that of herself she is nothing, and that all her being depends on God, in Whom alone and in no creature, she finds by experience that her happiness must rest, forsakes both herself and all things, to plunge herself as it were into the love of Him, directing to Him all her works and thoughts and powers. Without Him she cares not to be, because in Him she finds all that can delight the heart, all beauty, all sweetness, all quietness and all peace. And so, the bond of love between her and God growing closer, she comes as it were to be wholly transformed in Him. And at length it comes to pass that she can love, delight, think and remember no other thing than Him only. All other creatures she loves and considers in Him, even as a man who dives and swims under the water sees and seeks nothing which is not either the water or what is contained in the water. And even if he sees anything out of the water, he sees it not properly as it is in itself, but as the likeness of it appears in the water.

All the affections and powers unite in perfect souls to produce one harmonious sound, like the chords of a musical instrument. The powers of the soul are the great chords, the senses and sentiments of the body, the smaller

ones. And when all these are used to the praise of God and in the service of our neighbour, they produce one sound like that of a harmonious organ. All the saints have touched this organ and drawn forth musical tones. The first who sounded it was a sweet and loving Word, whose humanity united to His Divinity made sweet music of the wood of the cross. And all His servants have learnt of Him as of their Master, to give forth the same music, some in one way and some in another, Divine Providence giving all instruments on which to play.

MAN IS THY LYRE

By Julia P. Dabney

Man is Thy lyre, O Lord,
Man is Thy lyre!
Sweep us with uttered word;
Strike us with fire!
Set every fine-stretched string
Vitally vibrating,
Teaching our souls to sing
As Thy word may require.
Man is Thy lyre, O God;—
Touch us with fire!

Man is Thy lyre, O Lord!
If the string slack,
Cometh no living word
Answering back.
Oh if a string shall break,
Never a song shall wake,
Only a quivering ache,
Mocked of its high desire!
Man is Thy lyre, O God;—
Grant us Thy fire!

SPIRITUAL HEROISM

By Sister Daya

Heroism is a quality that lies latent in all human hearts. There is no coward so mean as not to have felt at some time or other life leap up within him in response to the heroic. It is like a bugle call to the human soul, bidding it come out into the big, free spaces of thought and action and give itself utterly. The heroic by its very nature wipes out all petty thoughts of small self-interest, in scorn of the mean and the personal. So mighty is its power that at its touch men struggle for the privilege of sacrifice and death. It brings out in us all that is magnanimous, noble and self-forgetting.

Man cannot live without the heroic. He must have it in some form or another, though we must admit that he generally prefers to take it vicariously through books. There comes a time, however, when mere words prove powerless to satisfy the hunger which he feels, to give himself for something that is greater than himself. It is out of this restless craving that wars are often born. When life becomes heavy with matter, when physical comfort fattens into an ideal and sordid self-seeking is held up as the wisest course of action, then men grow sick at heart, they know not why, and lacking higher vision, turn to the sacrifice of war as though it were food for their starving souls.

But man, if he only knew it, does not need to turn to war for the heroic. There is a heroism so much greater than the heroism of war that the laying down of the mere physical life seems comparatively easy beside it. There is an ideal so much loftier than all other ideals that the least we dare offer it is our whole being. The spiritual life is the heroic life. Those who turn away from it and re-

vile it, those who meet it with ridicule or contempt are not big enough to understand it and not brave enough to live it. The heroism that it requires is not an emotional heroism nor is it destructive to others. It is the continual and deliberate slaying of the petty self with its brood of demands and desires. It is the doing of this not for any hope of reward, not even to gain power or illumination, but for pure love of the Divine,—the all-wonderful Spirit within.

To struggle for months and then to fail, yet not to let that failure cloud our heart, our faith or our courage, is to be heroic. To guard ceaselessly every act and every thought that the enemy, self, may not enter in and to do this as vigilantly in times of spiritual deadness as in hours of burning fervour, is to be heroic. To refuse to hear any voice but the clear voice of the Spirit even when jealousy, anger and spiteful tattle are most clamorous, is to be heroic. To give all that we have and are through endless time to the Ideal and be content to find our only reward in the giving, is to be truly heroic. "The blessing of the vision is the vision itself, there is no other." Once we have gained that vision we know there could be no other, but on the way to it come moments of such blankness that if we are not steadfast, there is danger of our casting the hope of eternity aside for some fleeting human comfort.

Non-resistance, utter surrender to the Supreme! Dare the man of the world say that these take no heroism. No heroism to strip oneself bare of everything and place oneself in the hands of a Power that one as yet knows only through faith? It requires divine heroism. Some make the attempt, but they forget that "renunciation means giving up never to take back" and when danger threatens they resist with all the force of their human will. Theirs

is not the heroic spirit. The true hero will never take himself back. Even when faith is gone he will still give from the depths of his despair.

Giving is the key-note, ungrudging giving, but this giving must not spring from impulse. It must be the expression of our attitude towards life. Be too great of spirit ever to claim anything for yourself. Offer to life more than life can possibly take. Whatever it demands of us let us reply: "Is this all that you ask? I am ready to give far greater things than this." Remember that it is the resistance of the body that makes possible the cut of the sword.

Even physical pain can be lessened by non-resistance. When pain comes, if instead of shrinking from it, we throw open all the gates of our body as though we welcomed it; if we cease opposing it with tense nerves and contracted muscles we shall find that it becomes more friendly. But this is only incidental. The heroic spirit is not seeking for itself; it sweeps us beyond self into a purer region. Many times we touch those heights and cannot hold them. Yet that is no reason for discouragement if we have the strength to keep steadily on upon our chosen path, unshaken and unshakable.

To feel the Divine Flame within is an enormous aid, but our real spiritual gain is made when that flame seems to burn low. It is then that we learn to be steadfast and unless we are steadfast in every condition, how may we be trusted? It is during the hours of darkness and lack of vision that the petty human considerations seek entrance into our consciousness. Therefore the victories we gain then are fundamental. We are impregnable at no time if we are not impregnable at all times.

In India disciples are often put through searching tests

in order to try the metal of their souls. Do they seek surrender to God? Then let them show how well they can obey their spiritual Master. Swami Vivekananda used to question his pupils when they would speak of their undying devotion to him: "Would you be willing to go into the jaws of a tiger or before the mouth of a cannon if I were to ask you?" He knew that words without acts were like empty pods and also he knew that such devotion backed by action would sweep away all obstacles to spiritual attainment.

This uncalculating, selfless spirit has animated every true Saint and Saviour. They all stand forth as heroic figures. The worldly minded are apt to think of the spiritual life as lacking in red blood, an anemic existence fit only for weaklings and women. But let them who think thus stand as did the Christ before false accusers and keep silence. A thousand little injustices will come up in every day life by which they can test their inward strength. Have they the power to refrain from self-justification? We sometimes can control great anger, intense passion, but the small things, the passing spite, the gossipy word, the foolish vanities and hypocricies, choke our soul's growth in spite of all our efforts.

Dwelling on the heroic is an enormous help in the inner life. We need the bigness of it. A man may practise all manner of austerities, may be unflinching in the discipline which he gives his physical body, he may even be a so-called teacher of men, but if he is capable of subtle insinuations, of mean jealousy, of slurring remarks about a brother, he is neither heroic nor spiritual. There is something in the petty, utterly stultifying to the human soul. Even war with all its terror and awfulness is not as detrimental to man's progress as are the small daily conten-

tions of personal life. War has given us many instances of selfless devotion, such for instance as the sacrifice of Arnold von Winkelried at the battle of Sempach. The Swiss army was being broken to pieces on a solid wall of Austrian spears when von Winkelried leaped forward, gathered in his arms as many spears as he could reach and buried them in his own breast. This caused a breach in the enemy's ranks through which the Swiss rushed to victory. Anything that has the element of bigness gives room for the stirring of Spirit but there is nothing heroic in a household squabble.

When we feel inclined to brood upon paltry wrongs, let us summon before our mind's eye these uplifting pictures. Let us think of the great Indian Saint, Sri Ramakrishna who while in meditation under the Panchabati tree consciously entered into the one great Life of the universe as it moves through countless forms, becoming so dissolved in it that afterwards he was able to share the feeling of even a tiny leaf when it was broken. As we dwell on this will there be room in our minds for small grievances? Shall we not share a faint reflection of his vision? Or let us take the Gita and stand on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, beholding through the eyes of Arjuna the supreme and infinite form of the Lord. It was Arjuna who when given the choice by Sri Krishna, the Lord, of having a great army without His presence, or of having Him, the Lord, as his charioteer and no army, chose to stand alone with the Lord.

Shall we be capable of petty demands or thoughts of self if we constantly contemplate such things? India, the very cradle of the Spirit, has raised her children on ideals like these. She has always united the heroic with the spiritual. They must be united where realization crowns

theory, where "being and becoming" is demanded of the devotee. In the Occident, religion became associated in men's minds with weakness and inefficiency only when realization was no longer demanded of its protagonists.

It is an interesting fact that almost all the great Hindu Avatars and spiritual reformers have come not from the Brahman or priestly caste, but from the Kshatriyas or rulers, who were warriors by tradition and heroes by nature. "Bravery, energy, firmness, skill and also not flying from the battle, generosity, lordliness, are the duties of Kshatriyas" says the Gita. Likewise it was true of them that they gave refuge to the wounded and protection to all who sought sanctuary with them. They were truly Aryan or noble and they awakened India again and again with the living word of the Spirit: "Arise! awake! Having reached the Great Ones gain understanding." Sri Krishna's chiding of Arjuna at the opening of the Gita, strikes the same heroic note: ''O Arjuna, whence comes upon thee in this critical moment this depression unworthy of an Aryan, disgraceful, and contrary to the attainment of Heaven? O son of Pritha, yield not to unmanliness; it does not befit thee. Casting off this mean faint-heartedness, arise, O terror of thy foes!"

It may be asked what instinct is there in the human soul that urges it on into the heroic. Surely only a fool gives everything for nothing. Why should one surrender to an abstraction even to the point of death? The answer to the first question answers them all. The instinct which leads and will lead men to the heroic Ideal is the God-instinct within us. There is but one Life manifesting through ever-shifting form. We are That; we live because of That; we love because of That; we think because of That; we breathe because of That. From It springs

our aspiration for It is the life-breath of the soul.

All we lack is realization of this oneness. Like a man fighting his way through nightmare dreams to the sunlight of morning, we struggle through this dream of separated life to an awakening beyond mind and speech. Once we have even faintly recognized our Source, we must strive and ever strive for conscious union with It. Surrender to that One is said to be the crowning glory of existence, the ultimate fulfillment of all desire. Every yearning we have ever felt for anything has been but a yearning for this ultimate Light and Life, though we knew it not, and when it fills us it will fill us utterly. At first it may seem only an abstraction but to the brave, steadfast heart it soon manifests as supreme reality, more intimate than the personal, more vast than the sky. "The blessing of the vision is the vision itself," but only he who is heroic enough to cast all his human littleness into the pure fire of renunciation, will be great enough to perceive it.

THE PURE MEN OF OLD

By Chuang-Tzu. 4th Century B.C.

He who knows what God is, and who knows what man is, has attained. Knowing what God is, he knows that he himself proceeded therefrom. Knowing what man is, he rests in the knowledge of the known, waiting for the knowledge of the unknown. Working out one's allotted span and not perishing in mid career, this is the fulness of knowledge.

But what is a pure man?—The pure men of old acted without calculation, not seeking to secure results. They laid no plans. Therefore, failing, they had no cause for regret; succeeding, no cause for congratulation. And

thus they could scale heights without fear; enter water without becoming wet; fire, without feeling hot. So far had their wisdom advanced towards Tao (the Divine).

The pure men of old slept without dreams, and waked without anxiety. They ate without discrimination, breathing deep breaths. For pure men draw breath from their uttermost depths; the vulgar from the throat only.

If men's passions are deep, their divinity is shallow. The pure men of old did not know what it was to love life or to hate death. They did not rejoice in birth, nor strive to put off dissolution. They did not forget whence it was they had sprung, neither did they seek to hasten their return thither. Cheerfully they played their allotted parts, waiting patiently for the end. This is what is called not leading the heart astray from Tao, nor letting the human seek to supplement the divine. And this is what is meant by a pure man.

Such men are in mind absolutely free; in demeanor, grave; in expression, cheerful. If it is freezing cold, it seems to them like autumn; if blazing hot, like spring. Their passions occur like the four seasons. They are in harmony with all creation, and none know the limit thereof.

The outward appearance of the pure men of old derived its charm from the store of goodness within. They seemed to be of the world around them, while proudly treading beyond its limits. They seemed to desire silence, while in truth they had dispensed with language.

If you do not permit yourself to live for yourself, then involuntarily from boredom you begin to live for others.

—*Tolstoy.*

FOURTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

Of The Vedanta Centre of Boston

On the evening of January 9th the Vedanta Centre of Boston celebrated its 14th anniversary. So swiftly do the years fly by and so vivid are the memories of the Centre's small beginnings and early struggles that it is hard for the older members to realize that it has grown to be an old and established work with a very real place in the community. In spite of a night that had turned the sidewalks into paths of ice—a cold stormy night—the Chapel was well filled. Many old friends were present as well as many new ones and not a few strangers, who then and there became friends. A rare and lovely simplicity, characteristic of all the Centre's activities, seemed to pervade the whole atmosphere, causing every one to feel spiritually at home.

Swami Paramananda spoke as usual with directness and spontaneity on the growth and the ideals of the work. First, however, he called upon Sister Daya to give a brief report of the year just passed. The Sister did not touch upon dates and figures but strove to draw a picture of the inner life which lies back of the outer life of the Centre. She said that what the world would call a good report might be a danger signal in a work of this kind; but that the members need have no fear of the material element creeping in and destroying the spiritual beauty of the Vedanta Centre. It had a safe-guard that would protect it even though it grew many times as large and that safeguard was the Swami. So long as he was the head and the heart of the work it would never lose its spiritual quality. She referred to the peculiarly rapid growth that had been made during the past year in the face of outer difficulties and problems. "But just as flowers when

bruised breathe forth a richer scent, so a soul," she said, "under the pressure of circumstance manifests its essential quality." The weight of trouble had drawn from the Swami neither despondency nor complaint, but a collection of rare poems which had sustained the household through many trying hours and had seemed, as it were, the fragrance of his spiritual being. In this way even hardships had been turned into blessings.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA'S ADDRESS

Then the Swami spoke. "This celebration" he began, "is like the birthday of an individual, but it should not be observed merely through feasting. Its aim and object is to prepare us for another year's work so that we may set forth with hearts full of prayer and humility, with clear inner conviction and with renewed consecration. When these are united within us we cannot go wrong, but when we lack these, no matter how vigorous our efforts may be, our path is fraught with danger.

When this work was first started it was a question whether or not we should organize it as every society is organized with by-laws and officers. Of course organization has its advantages. It provides a background; but also spiritually it can weaken. I wanted to experiment, to build on a spiritual basis, laying just as little importance as possible on the mechanical side. It is no easy thing to begin a new work, especially in a strange country among strange people. Out of many thousands you perhaps find one who has the courage and the conviction to stand up and acknowledge his belief. The majority are too afraid of public opinion. In these circumstances many of my friends doubted the wisdom of trying to adopt new methods; but it was my firm conviction and through divine grace it has, I think, proved successful. I hope it

may always prove so. If we have too many forms and boundary lines we become narrowed down.

A point now has been reached where the work justifies a place two or three times as large as its present home, even to accommodate the Sunday attendance. But when it comes to enlarging the work I feel reluctant. It is not limited to this place. I hope it never will be, for the Spirit to which we have consecrated our lives, is not limited. There are yearning hearts everywhere. The work has eager friends all over the United States and even abroad. I have travelled as much as 25,000 miles in one year, sometimes going twice to California and back, as well as making many trips to nearby places,—cities within a thousand miles or less. As a result of these journeys, people have been drawn here from great distances. This year there have been friends from Louisville, Washington, New York and Cincinnati. Recently a gentleman whom I met in Portland, Oregon, came over from New York City where he was visiting, just to attend our Christmas services. He returned to New York and he is with us again to-night. These things are gratifying. They mean that the Centre in a small measure is fulfilling its mission.

I have gone on quietly these years and I am perfectly willing to wait. What we are trying to do is to create an atmosphere with our life, our devotion and our spirit of service. If we had weighed and measured our success, if we had calculated how many came or stayed away, I think there would be few here now. That driving attitude for success would have made it impossible for me to endure the ordeal I went through right here in Boston. To-day we have a big place and a large number of friends. It was not

always so; but always I have had One Friend to guide me and always will I take the guidance of that Friend.

Whether the Centre grows or receives a check may we ever bear in mind that ours is to render service with the same spirit that prompted us to start this work and to carry it on. So long as we hold to the ideal of simplicity and directness, the Spirit will not fail us. No man is so great that he should ever feel superior or indifferent to his fellow-beings. If he does he is no longer great; he has barred the road to greatness. True greatness consists in the simple life. It is a motto we are striving to make our own. Only when human calculation enters in do we grow narrow and mechanical. I pray with all my heart that those who come into this work may never lose that breadth of vision.

Before closing I would like to speak of one more thing: our little monthly magazine, "The Message of The East." When I returned from India in 1911 my mind conceived the idea of sending forth a message which would strike a universal note,—the message of the East. It was started very modestly, its growth has been unostentatious, but to-day it enters its twelfth year. The eleven volumes which comprise it are a wonderful addition to any library because in them we have tried to set forth not merely the mysticism of India or the tenets of any creed or cult, but the cream, the essence, of all the great thoughts of the world, Indo-Aryan, Greek, Persian, Chinese,—all.

It has not been an easy work. Practically every magazine carries a large number of advertisements. We have never had one single advertisement except our own book list. We were warned that it was a visionary idea, that we could never make such a magazine self-supporting. But a tree is known by its fruit. In recent years "The

Message" has fully paid for itself. People are learning to value it more and more. Not long ago a gentleman spent a generous sum trying to obtain an early volume.

You must realize that our workers, none of them, are paid anything for their efforts. It is a labor of love. In India, the Ramakrishna Mission of which this work is a part, has various lines of activity, not merely teaching but relief work of all kinds. At the call of distress whether from flood, famine or plague, the Mission brothers and their assistants go voluntarily to render service because they love to serve. Love for love's sake; service for the sake of service, this is the inspiration of our work. We have been asked what we get out of it. What we get out of it is incalculable; the results cannot be measured. Should we spoil them by seeking a small material return? Can we calculate the influence the work is exerting to-day among people? May it always be that way,—"Noiseless dew-drops falling on unopened flower-buds, not conscious of their heavenly heritage,"—so that those connected with the work may grow stronger, more courageous, more unselfish, more wholly consecrated. In our human relationships we do not often gain outer recognition, but if we can keep our inner fire clear and glowing, then whether we are thrown among friends or in the midst of strangers we shall find a bond of fellowship just from the fact that we are human beings, born of the one common Divine stock."

Interwoven with the various activities of the evening was lovely music from cello, violin and organ, contributed by three talented friends of the Centre. Light refreshments were served after which the guests went reluctantly home. Even then the celebration continued, for at midnight, by special invitation, Mr. Walter Hampden, the

great Shakespearean actor, with Mrs. Hampden and other prominent members of the company walked from the theatre to the Centre in a driving snow and stayed till two o'clock in the morning.

REPORT

On January 14th immediately after the Sunday morning service, Swami Paramananda left for the middle west on a short lecture tour, his first trip away from Boston since last March. Cincinnati, Louisville and Dayton were the only cities he was able to visit. This gave the Swami ample time to speak at least twice in each place and yet be back in Boston for the following Sunday. Louisville was particularly warm in its welcome, but everywhere he met with deep and sincere appreciation. One new feature was added to his program,—the reading of his poems at the morning class following the evening address.

In Cincinnati the Swami's coming gladdened the hearts of the small group of faithful workers who truly constitute an outpost of the Boston Centre. For long months they have held together with unshakable faith and fervour, thus proving their steadfastness. Six of the devoted students even followed the Swami to Dayton in order to be present at his evening lecture before the Dayton Psychology Club. This necessitated their leaving Cincinnati in the afternoon immediately after the close of business and returning from Dayton before dawn so as to be back home for the opening of business in the morning. Of the blessing this brought to them all, one of the young men writes: "I can still hear the lingering accents of Swami's voice, giving us his blessing and pouring forth those sacred poems. 'Forward, ever onward, my soul, march on!' Surely he has opened my Soul's Secret Door. As our train sped along the next morning I felt as though I was leaving hallowed ground."

WORKS BY SWAMI PARAMANANDA

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

MARCH, 1923

POWER OF FAITH

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Soul's Secret Door

By SWAMI PARAMANANDA

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There is poetry in the soul of India. Rabindranath Tagore has taught this to the western world, thanks largely to the fame and influence incident to his winning of the Nobel Prize. But there are other singers native to this country, both ancient and modern, whose voices have the authentic note of inspiration.

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The contemplative mood of the Hindu psalms in the Swami Paramananda's book, "Soul's Secret Door," is characteristically Oriental. All sing the oneness of the soul with and in God. Some of these hymns reprove the material character of our times. The book sheds an almost tonic sense of peace and repose.—*Evening Post, New York.*

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

Published monthly except in August and September

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KINGDOM OF PURE THOUGHT

By Swami Paramananda

OUR thoughts lift us up to vision's lofty heights,
Where we stand upright and strong
As if out of evil's ominous reach.
Then again our own thoughts,
Blinding our mind by false persuasion,
Lead us downward to a narrower sphere,
Enchaining us to a world of endless conflict.
Here we struggle, carrying heavy loads,
And our dejected hearts bend down with
broken faith.
Greed, ambition, self-love and pride
Drag us on through this mire of ignorance.
Help us! Help us! we cry in agony of soul.
Give us again our lost kingdom of pure thought;
Restore unto us our peace.
We ask no more for the vanities of this world.
Master of Fate!
O Lord of Light!
Save us! Save us!
With helpless heart we pray unto Thee!

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Have faith in God. Therefore, I say unto you what things soever ye desire when ye pray believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them.—*Jesus the Christ.*

The heart of love and faith spreads, as it were, a beneficent shade from the world of men to the world of gods.

Therefore, O Bhikkhus, be full of faith, modesty in heart, afraid of sin, anxious to learn, strong in energy, active in mind and full of wisdom.—*Buddha.*

We sleep in peace in the arms of God when we yield ourselves up to His providence, in a delightful consciousness of His tender mercies; no more restless uncertainties, no more anxious desires, no more impatience at the place we are in; for it is God who has put us there, and who holds us in His arms. Can we be unsafe where He has placed us?—*Fenelon.*

He who has not faith in others, shall find no faith in them.—*Laotze.*

He who can resign himself to the will of the Lord with simple faith and guileless devotion, attains unto Him without delay. He who has faith has all, and he who lacks faith lacks all.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

He who believes in God is not careful for the morrow, but labors joyfully and with a great heart. "For He giveth His beloved, as in sleep." They must work and watch, yet never be careful or anxious; but commit all to Him, and live in serene tranquillity; with a quiet heart, as one who sleeps safely and quietly.—*Martin Luther.*

Man consists of his faith. He is verily what his faith is.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

CONSTRUCTIVE POWER OF FAITH

By Swami Paramananda

What economic value faith exerts upon our life! Our modern life so bent on practical utility will have no share in visions and uncertain speculation. So must we not set aside the doctrine of faith as an ornament of by-gone age? Yet in spite of all this barricade of material logic, the soul of man invariably turns its ear to the echo of the distant past,—"Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place: and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." It leaves very little room for speculation. "Nothing shall be impossible unto you" is very definitely stated. Faith is a dynamic and a constructive force in our life. Through the exertion of this divine gift men have wrought miracles in every age and in every country. We may scoff at the very mention of faith and try to discard it from our highly civilized modern life, but in no way do we shake this eternal foundation of truth save to impoverish our individual life.

Perhaps one strong reason for our disinclination towards faith is that it cannot stand the test of science. Faith and rationalism are not opposed to each other. In fact they supplement each other. The faculty of pure reasoning leads us to knowledge and knowledge gives us faith. Perhaps if we put belief, reason, knowledge and faith together, we have the complete picture of mental phenomena. How our mind, as it were, climbs from belief to reason and through reason to knowledge, and from knowledge to ultimate faith. Perhaps we can make it clearer by relating it to our every day experience. Sometimes we gain information through a trustworthy source and we say we believe it and are willing to make further

investigation in the matter. But if the same information is given by an untrustworthy person and if it seems unreasonable, we drop it and no further inquiry is made. So first we believe because of the trustworthy source; then we exert our reasoning faculty; we strive and inquire, and as the result of this we gain true knowledge of the subject. Then we can stand up and say, I have absolute faith in this. If this is true in our material life, how much more true it must be in the spiritual realm. For when we come upon the threshold of what science designates as unknowable phenomena, what better means can we have than to place our trust in that part of our being which does not come within the evidence of our physical senses.

From the crudest concept of religion to its purest and loftiest expression, tremendous emphasis has always been laid upon faith. Throughout the ages we find numberless instances of miracles perfomed through the power of faith. Are not miracles the working out of higher laws on the spiritual plane? The man of consecration who depends primarily on God, and knows that he is sustained by the Will of God, can perform that which may seem impossible or supernatural because he has united himself with the basic power of the universe. The skeptic, however, looks upon these happenings as brain hallucinations because he confuses faith with a morbid idea of non-action and argues that it is not for this age,—that we cannot live by faith alone. No teaching, however lofty it may appear, however much it may appeal to the aesthetic or intellectual sense, can hold man's regard for long unless it has a practical basis. Faith has found its fulfillment in the lives of the world's greatest men.

We are all creatures of faith. It is not that any of us fundamentally lack faith, but we all place our faith dif-

ferently; and a great deal of our variance springs from this cause. Our devotion to higher ideals of life, or lack of it, is directly due to where we place our trust. We are not attached to materiality through accident. It is because our inherent nature believes it to be of paramount importance. Our mind and heart will naturally follow their accustomed ways in spite of all our codes and creeds. We prove it especially in the hour of emergency. For instance, when a person is ill he calls a physician because he has faith in the power of the physician to cure him. Whenever we are in need of human assistance we call on those who can fulfill our requirements, because we have faith in them. Similarly there are souls who have unquestioning faith in God, and naturally in their hour of need they call on Him and receive their assistance from that divine Source. Faith in the Divine, however, can never be imitated. It must be natural, spontaneous and genuine.

We may ask, what is the philosophy of faith? It is most simple, but subtle. For this reason how often the worldly wise pass by its gate unaware of its benevolent power! That is why we find great men telling us again and again, unless we become like little children we cannot enter this holy kingdom of faith. But all our philosophic reasoning and genuine search will always lead us to the ultimate conclusion that the why and wherefore of our being is contained in the great Cause.

There is a great difference between faith and what people call belief. Belief is superficial and is most easily shaken, but faith makes us strong and steadfast. We cannot have faith in God unless we know that He exists. We cannot have faith in the immortality of our soul unless we have an inner conviction of immortality. Faith

is not an abstract indefinite sentiment to be put away on a shelf. At the outset it is necessary for us to exert our intellectual faculties to the utmost, but there are things we cannot grasp by reason only,—things which belong to the Infinite, and to these we can find our access more naturally through childlike simplicity and trust. A great teacher once said to a disciple who was inclined to tear things apart intellectually: "My son, do you think you can measure the Infinite with a tape measure?"

Divinity is ever present in every heart, but through our critical attitude and doubting mind we often deprive ourselves of Its beneficent Presence. Sri Ramakrishna used to say one finds God very directly and simply through faith, but intellectual arguments only drive Him further and further away. How often Christ said: "As ye believe, so will it be." A man of faith constructs something beautiful even in the midst of chaos, while he of doubting mind always destroys even that which has been created for his happiness. A doubting mind is a diseased mind. We are able neither to receive a blessing nor retain it so long as our mind is full of doubt and despair. Humanity finds its best expression in those who place their utmost trust in God and remain firm under all the varying circumstances of life. In this age of materiality it is most inspiring to see a man who is willing to face any difficulty, to lay down his life for the sake of his ideal. The skeptical man of the world will not believe in the conquering power of such a life. He wishes to accomplish everything at once. He has neither the spiritual insight nor the patience to wait, and he who will not wait for the cosmic law to work out, always perishes.

The man who is full of faith in the Divine does not work for self-gratification. He has a larger point of view.

He works for humanity. How could it be otherwise with one who has become part of God's plan? He has learned to offer himself in perfect faith and no matter in what circumstances he is placed, he never forgets that his life belongs only to that One. The man who stands on this rock of truth is unshakable. He is no longer connected with the small and the personal; he has connected himself with the cosmic force; he has set his faith right and because of that has become invincible. But placing our faith in God does not mean that we are going to eliminate all our troubles and tribulations. That is not so. On the contrary, our test may be greater than that of others. We should be very glad to have hardships placed upon us so that we may prove our faith. People who lack faith are, as a rule, always faint-hearted. Whenever a difficulty comes or too much is demanded of them, they give way because they have no trust in the infinite, inexhaustible reservoir of life.

Faith has a three-fold aspect. When we limit our concept of life to this little span of existence, we cannot help but doubt ourselves, doubt humanity and doubt God. These three go together. A man who has no faith in his own divine heritage cannot have faith in God; and a man who has no faith either in God or in himself certainly cannot have faith in humanity. Doubt throws the whole world into a state of turmoil. It destroys the moral fibre of humanity as well as the entire social fabric. Men grow suspicious of each other and this suspicion is not limited to a community or a country, it becomes a world-wide disease resulting in war, intolerance and all kinds of hideous conditions. The starting place for all this is the individual heart. Doubt is like a little germ which gets lodged in the heart and infects the whole being.

The degradation of the individual begins when he loses faith in the power of God and no longer believes that he has any access to Divinity. As soon as man allows himself to believe that he is not of God he cannot help but doubt himself. As he doubts himself, he lowers his standard and becomes incapable of doing anything good or noble. The Shepherd of Hermes tells us: "Turn unto the Lord with all thy heart and ask of him without doubting and Thou shalt know the mercy of the Lord; how that He will not forsake thee, but will fulfill the request of thy soul. For God is not as men mindful of the injuries He has received; but He forgets injuries and has compassion upon His creature. Wherefore purify thy heart from doubting and put on faith and trust in God; and thou shalt receive all that thou shalt ask. But if thou shouldst chance to ask somewhat and not immediately receive it, yet do not therefore doubt because thou has not presently received the petition of thy soul."

We must have faith. Faith in what, you may ask. In the nearest thing we can find. Is our life so devoid of good that we have nothing in which we can place our trust? There is a divine spark in humanity and the man of faith finds it; not only does he find it but with his faith he inspires even the skeptical and the doubting. That is one of the greatest services the master-spirits render to the world. By their own faith they awaken the faith of humanity. They trust even the wicked who come in contact with them and they overwhelm them by their child-like, simple and unquestioning trust. Such souls exert a constructive influence not only upon individuals but upon a whole community. Faith regenerates. There is no limit to the power of the human soul. A man who thinks himself the most sinful of all sinners, fallen without hope, rises to

his feet again when a wise and loving heart comes and rekindles in him the divine spark. No matter what he has done, no matter how deep has been his sin, he is redeemed.

You sometimes say, how can I believe when I have failed so many times? Do not doubt yourself. Do not be conscious only of the material aspect of your life; go deeper, to the Root, to the Source. Are we not part of the Cosmic universe? No matter how small or insignificant we may seem at times,—we are always connected with the great whole. That should be the starting point for our thought and action. As we think, so we become. If we begin by thinking we are sinners, born in iniquity, we shall very quickly become so. If we think that human beings cannot be trusted, because they are evilly constituted, we do injustice to humanity. But when people cheat us, rob us, maltreat us, how can we place our faith in them? There is a place in every heart upon which we can absolutely depend. We must try to find that. No matter how degraded a person may be, there is still within him the divine spark. If we fail to call that out, we have failed in our duty towards ourselves and towards our fellow-men. It may seem a difficult task. It is. It is no ordinary task. It is not for the person who is impatient for results and wants everything for himself. It is for those who have ideals and are ready to live and die for them.

We must learn to go deep down in our soul. As soon as we have found our centre of being, the whole aspect of of life changes. The person we doubted before, we now trust. The persons we shrank from, we now want to draw close to, for we find the same heart beating in their breasts as in our own. This discovery binds us to them with a bond of love. Do not lose your faith in humanity. The

spark of Divinity is everywhere. It may not always be shining on the surface. But never doubt, because by doubting we hinder ourselves and we also hinder others. No matter how many times we may be deceived we must make our faith more unshakable. Have faith in your spiritual being; believe in your divine heritage; remind yourself constantly that you are a child of God, that your life is not a matter of chance or accident, but that you have come directly from that one unchanging Source. This is a good way to lay our foundation.

Faith is a marvellous gift. It gives us direct access to Divinity. Contrary forces may come and try to make us disbelieve, but we have felt and we have known. When we feel and know, we do not doubt. We should gather up all our efforts in order to reach that point in our spiritual evolution. One direct glimpse of our ideal will convince us. All the great personages in sacred history were men of tremendous faith in their spiritual power, in their divine heritage. Nothing could tempt them because what they had was infinitely finer than anything any one could give. They would not exchange their treasure for any material possession. It is said of Mohammed that his uncle tried to dissuade him from his religious ardor, as it was making him unpopular among the people. He offered him a large sum of money if he would keep quiet about his faith. This was Mohammed's answer: "If you gave me the sun in one hand and the moon in the other, I should not give it up." A stream can never go backward. When that stream of faith once begins to flow, it washes us clean of alien matter.

The more we know of the vastness, the infinitude of God, the greater grows our humility. There are certain principles which go with the spiritual life: faith, humility

and steadfast devotion. This devotion is not sentimentality; it is a definite glowing feeling that arises spontaneously from one's own inner depths. Without it we lose much of the beauty of life. There is no happiness for the man of doubting mind either in this world or the next, because we carry to the next world only the things we have set our heart on here. If our heart is set on the small and ephemeral, if petty ideas overwhelm us, we carry those with us. Therefore we must begin to make a spiritual foundation right from the beginning.

When a man says "I can't", it is because he is depending too much on his physical strength and his mental calibre, and does not take into consideration that higher power which sustains and directs him. Self-reliance and faith are not opposed. When we combine these two ideas we are invincible. God is ever seeking our co-operation and we must ever seek the aid and co-operation of God, no matter what task we undertake. When we place our trust in the Divine we can surmount all dangers and even death cannot thwart us.

One who knows definitely the majesty of his own soul and his alliance with Divinity never loses his courage or his faith. There are people who condemn a religion or philosophy without knowing anything about it, or even taking the trouble to investigate it. They think themselves very clever. On the contrary, they are destructive to themselves and to their fellow-beings. The Katha Upanishad says of these: "Fools dwelling in ignorance, yet imagining themselves wise and learned, go round and round in crooked ways, like the blind leading the blind." Such people again and again fall under the sway of disease, death and affliction. A simple trustful nature carries us smoothly over the sea of life, but when we be-

gin to dispute the why and wherefore of things we are overwhelmed. Once a man wanted to cross a river and a sage gave him an amulet and told him that it would carry him across the water safely. The man started with it and was surprised to see that he was able to walk over the water; but when he reached the middle of the river, curiosity entered his mind and he opened it to see what it was. He found only the name of the Lord Rama written on it and thought, "Is that all!" As soon as he lost his faith, he sank down.

Let us be silent and full of faith so that we can hear God's voice. This turbulent mind of ours plays havoc with us. It has power to create and also to destroy. It is one of the most potent instruments we have. We can so train it that it will be free from suspicion and doubt, full of trust in the Divine; or we can make it so unruly that it tears everything to pieces, even the most beautiful. We find people in the world who create an atmosphere of destruction behind them and before them and all about them. They not only have no peace in their own hearts, but they destroy the peace of others. For this reason Sri Krishna says with such dynamic force: "Cutting asunder with the sword of wisdom this doubt of Self, born of ignorance, lying in the heart, take refuge in Yoga of wisdom and arise!" It is good counsel for all of us. There are moments when we lose courage. The haze of doubt enshrouds our high vision and we feel downcast. But let us always carry in our heart the precious light of faith. At first it may seem very small, a little flickering candle light; but it will suffice, it will grow in volume, in power, if only we know how to nurture it. That is all we need to do.

Every one of us cannot become a master, but we can

place ourselves with unflinching faith directly under the guiding hand of God; but not with calculation as to how much we are going to get out of it. Those who ask nothing for themselves are the richest. They have abundance to give in the way of love, life and strength, because they are not beggars. Do not let us be beggars. When we know that the Infinite is our heritage, as our faith increases in that, the less we feel oppressed by material circumstances. The heart of the mystic always knows this and cries: "Oh! faith, faith; oh! marvellous virtue, which illumines the spirit of man and leads him to the knowledge of his Creator. Oh! virtue altogether lovely, so little known, and still less practised, yet which, once known, is so glorious, so full of unspeakable blessing."

SUMMUM BONUM

By Louise Imogen Guiney

Waiting on Him who knows us and our need,
Most need have we to dare not, nor desire,
But as He giveth, softly to suspire
Against His gift with no inglorious greed,
For this is joy, though still our joys recede;
And, as in octaves of a noble lyre,
To move our minds with His, and clearer, higher,
Sound forth our fate: for this is strength indeed.

Thanks to His love let earth and man dispense
In smoke of worship when the heart is stillest,
A praying more than prayer: "Great good have I,
Till it be greater good to lay it by;
Nor can I lose peace, power, permanence,
For these smile on me from the thing Thou willest!"

TRUST THYSELF

By Ralph Waldo Emerson

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Not for nothing one face, one character, one fact, makes much impression on him, and another none. This sculpture in the memory is not without pre-established harmony. The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it might testify of that particular ray. We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate and of good issues, so it be faithfully imparted, but God will not have his work made manifest by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace.

Trust thyself; every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner,

not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort and advancing on chaos and the dark.

SEEK THE HIGHEST

By Swami Vivekananda

Let your souls ascend day and night like an "unbroken string" unto the feet of the Beloved, whose throne is in your own hearts, and let the rest take care of themselves, that is the body and everything else. Life is evanescent, a fleeting dream; youth and beauty fade;—say day and night, "Thou art my father, my mother, my husband, my love, my lord, my God—I want nothing but Thee, nothing but Thee. Nothing but Thee, nothing but Thee. Thou in me, I in Thee; I am Thou, Thou art me." Wealth goes, beauty vanishes, life flies, powers fly—but the Lord abideth forever, love abideth forever. If there is glory in keeping the machine in good trim, it is more glorious to withhold the soul from suffering with the body—that is the only demonstration of your being "not matter," by letting matter alone.

Stick to God. Who cares what comes to the body or to anything else! Through the terrors of evil, say,—my God, my love! Through the pangs of death, say,—my God, my love! Through all the evils under the sun, say, —my God, my love! Thou art here, I see Thee. Thou art with me, I feel Thee. I am Thine, take me. I am not the world's, but Thine; leave not then me. Do not go for glass beads leaving the mine of diamonds! This life is a great chance. What, seekest thou the pleasures of the world!—He is the foundation of all bliss. Seek for the highest, aim at the highest and you shall reach the highest.

LET THY SOUL BE AT PEACE

From Letters of St. Francis de Sales

Nothing can really disturb us save self-love and self-esteem. If we have no tenderness of heart, no taste or sentiment for prayer, no inward sweetness in meditation, we begin directly to be downcast:—if we find it difficult to do right, if hindrances come between us and our good intentions, we grow anxious and eager to thrust them aside. And self-love is one cause of our troubles, self-esteem is another. Why are we so astonished, disturbed, impatient when we commit some fault? Doubtless because we thought that we were good, steadfast, firm; and finding that it is quite otherwise, we are vexed and put out; whereas, if we realized what we are, so far from marvelling because we fall, we should rather marvel how we ever stand upright! But we like nothing save what is pleasant, and we do not like to be brought face to face with our own weakness and worthlessness.

Keep your soul in an attitude of heartfelt trust in God, and the more you are encompassed with troubles and infirmities, hope the more steadfastly in Him. Be very humble; but let it be a generous, restful humility. Be very faithful in serving our Master, but let your service be child-like and loving, free from all that is harsh and repelling. Strive to maintain a holy gladness, which may shine forth in your words and actions, and be attractive to those around you, leading them to glorify God—our only aim.

He who makes God the object of all his intentions and does what he can, has no reason to torment himself, or to be disturbed or fearful. God is not terrible to those who love Him. He is satisfied with a little, for He knows so well that we have not much to give. Remember, too, that our Lord is called the Prince of Peace in Holy Scripture,

and that wheresoever He is Lord alone, He keeps all things in peace. True, before peace, He sometimes requires war; dividing the heart and soul from affections to which they cling; such as excessive self-love, self-confidence, complacency, and the like. And when He tears us from these cherished passions, He seems to be scarifying the very heart, and we can hardly help resisting a process which is so painful. But even such resistance is not devoid of peace, if, however overwhelmed, we still strive to unite our will to that of our Lord, nailing it to His Cross, and working steadily on in our appointed course—even as He resigned His Will to His Father's. Surely it well befits the Prince of Peace to be at peace amidst war, and to possess sweetness amid all bitterness. Learn, then, that while we think we have lost our peace amid troubles, it is not really so, if we are renouncing ourselves and clinging to God's good pleasure, obeying Him in our daily duties. Learn, too, that we must suffer pain while God tears off the "old man" in order to put on the "new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Nor need we be disturbed, or imagine ourselves displeasing to God, therefore. Be sure that all restless, excited thoughts do not come from God, the Prince of Peace, but are temptations of the enemy, to be rejected and banished.

Strive everywhere and in all things to be at peace. If trouble comes from within or without, receive it peacefully. If joy comes, receive it peacefully, without excitement. If we must needs fly from evil, let us do it calmly, without agitation, or we may stumble and fall in our haste. Let us do good peacefully, or our hurry will lead us into sundry faults. Even repentance is a work that should be carried on peacefully.

MORALITY AND RELIGION

By Swami Ramakrishnananda

Essentially there is no difference between morality and religion. An immoral religious man is as impossible to imagine as a triangular circle. Religion consists in the renunciation of sensual pleasures, so does also morality; morality raises a man from the kingdom of animals to the kingdom of God, and religion takes him by the hand and leads him into that kingdom and brings him face to face with God. Morality is the active side of religion. Its existence is in practice and not in theory. Man's higher religion consists in meditation and enjoyment of God when once he is admitted into that higher plane of morality. Morality is the gate-keeper of the kingdom of heaven and higher religion is a guide in that kingdom to lead the man to God, who is the one eternal Truth and Bliss combined together.

The path of morality is an uphill path and therefore not so easy to travel. It requires an effort on the part of the traveller. It is easy to get angry, but it is difficult to restrain anger; it is easy to curse, but it is difficult to bless him who despitefully curses you. It is easy to love friends, but it is difficult to pray for the well-being of one's own enemy. But we must always remember that there can be no royal road to moral perfection, as there is no royal road to geometry. To realize that highest end we must struggle hard and always pray to God to help us. Says Jesus, "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and you shall find, knock and it must follow that the gate of the kingdom of heaven shall be opened to you." Heaven helps those who help themselves. The Father in heaven is always watching our works here with interest and when He sees one of His children sincerely laboring to gain a certain

end and not finding it, which always demands a little more strength from Him, He stretches forth His helping hand and enables His child to reach his ideal. Such being the case, why should we lose heart, knowing that we have an ever-merciful and almighty Father always beside us to help us out of all difficulties and give us whatever we want?

Faith in God is the surest and easiest means to make you great and good and morally perfect. "A fool hath said in his heart there is no God," says the Bible. "I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind," says Bacon. Although Bacon, because he was a Christian, could not believe in all the fables of the Alcoran, as a Mohammedan should do, yet he could not bring himself down to believe that this universal frame was without a mind. God appeared to him to be so self-evident. Looking at the creation, no sane man can bring himself to believe that there is no creator behind it. So if God is a reality, and if that God is all-merciful and everywhere, is it not a matter of great advantage to us to achieve whatever is noble and high and great, since the ever-smiling and ever-helping God is ready to help us whenever we want? When I do a certain difficult action in the presence of one who can easily do that and will readily help me to do it, if I only ask him, I never get disheartened at seeing the difficulty of the work, but rather try my best to do the work myself without asking the help of my superior. I find a certain energy and alacrity in doing that difficult piece of business instead of getting disheartened and being doubtful of my success. Such is the case with the man who has faith in God, who lives and moves and has his being in God, who knows God to be his nearest and dearest Friend.

IMPREGNABLE SECURITY

By Epictetus

Our wall is secure, we have provisions for a very long time, and every other preparation. These are what render a city fortified and impregnable, but nothing but its principles render the human soul so. For what wall is so strong, what body so impenetrable, or what possession so unalienable, or what dignity so secured against stratagems? All things else, everywhere else, are mortal, easily reduced; and whoever in any degree fixes his mind upon them, must necessarily be subject to perturbation, despair, terrors, lamentations, disappointed desires, and incurred aversions.

And will we not fortify then the only place of security that is granted us, and, withdrawing ourselves from what is mortal and servile, diligently improve what is immortal and by nature free? Do we not remember that no one either hurts or benefits another; but the principle, which we hold concerning everything, doth it? It is this that hurts us; this that overturns us. Here is the fight, the sedition, the war.

Now, the very nature of every one is to pursue good, to avoid evil, to esteem him as an enemy and betrayer who deprives us of the one, and involves us in the other, though he be a brother, or a son, or father. For nothing is more nearly related to us than good. So that if good and evil consist in externals, there is no affection between father and son, brother and brother; but all is everywhere full of enemies, betrayers, sycophants. But if a right choice be the only good, and a wrong one the only evil, what further room is there for quarrelling, for reviling? About what? About what is nothing to us? Against whom? Against the ignorant, against the unhappy, against those

who are deceived in things of the greatest importance?

Mindful of this, Socrates lived in his own house, patiently bearing a furious wife, a senseless son. For what were the effects of her fury? The throwing as much water as she pleased on his head, the trampling a cake under her feet. "And what is this to me, if I think such things nothing to me? This very point is my business, and neither a tyrant nor a master shall restrain my will; nor multitudes, though I am a single person; nor one ever so strong, though I am ever so weak. For this is given by God to every one, free from restraint."

These principles make friendship in families, concord in cities, peace in nations. They make a person grateful to God, everywhere in good spirits about externals as belonging to others, as of no value. But we, alas! are able indeed to write and read these things, and to praise them when they are read; but very far from being convinced by them.

BOOK REVIEW

"Dissertation on Painting" by Babu Mohendra Nath Dutt, published by Seva Series Publishing Home, Calcutta, India.

The treatment of the subject is quite out of the ordinary. The author shows a wide grasp of the subject, and this is due to his travels abroad for many years and his ability to assimilate the art and ideals of other nations of the world. In the chapter on "What is Painting" is revealed the author's aim and tendency towards spiritual transcendentalism. We quote passages for the benefit of our readers.

"Painting is an attempt to represent or reproduce a picture of the mind through colour and lines or by certain

suggestives. In the mind we have the picture, we visualise the ideas in a glaring form; we stop short, compose our nerves and try to reach a calmness, a dignified attitude and sober state of the mind. We select a few materials—the colour and the lines and attempt to represent through this symbology what is passing inside the mind. The one is the ideal, the other is the representation. In this stage the painter actually remains in a state of conscious trance. He tries his utmost through these suggestive representations to bring down the ideal within the observing faculty of persons or to raise up the mind of the observer to the level and high pitch of his ideal. . . . This sort of representing the ideal is really the highest stage of meditation. The divinity is attempted to be expressed through suggestive hints either by symbology or lines and colours. . . .

"When in the deep state of identification, the inner and outer layers of the mind become separated, the outer layers or the changeable portion of the mind becomes identified with the observed object and the constant or the unchangeable part of the mind remains calm as an observer. The one part plays out the observation—Lila, while the other is the calm unchangeable one—Nitya. But what is beyond Nitya and Lila we cannot affirm,—it is the Avaktyam, the unspeakable state. All that the painter does is that he bifurcates himself into his dual self, either from the real or projected self. In the first state the mind of the painter and the corporeal form stand apart making the observed object as a separate entity. . . .

"The mind makes introspection and retrospection—the inward and the outward courses. The outward coating or his corporeal form slowly fades away. He forgets his own body and limbs and deep meditation comes in. The

more he can make himself incorporeal, the better he can understand the other thing—the suggestive; and as the notion of observation rises higher and higher from the corporeal to the incorporeal, the suggestive and his gross corporeal stages drop off and in the highest stage the presence of the substratum of one becomes identified with the substratum of the other. In this highest stage the painter sees the object, visualises it, but cannot move his body—a state of conscious trance is reached, the divinity or Prana of the object then reveals and slowly as he comes back to his corporeal form and gradually comes down to his separate bodily existence he brings back with him the reminiscence or the notion of the ideal and tries to draw out a few lines and marks to make a suggestive of the idea which he has visualised. It is through this constant state of meditation of making oneself incorporeal and coming up to the higher stage of the mind that many painters in the later days of their life turn out to be saints; for meditation of divinity must pass through all the psychological stages which the painter is undergoing. The real painter must be pure in mind and pure in body and saintly in his behaviour that he might reveal the pith and marrow of the idea. Painting might be called a system of philosophy written out by symbols and colours. . . .

"To exhibit subtleness of the mind, an earnest longing to know more of the ideal and to be identified with it are the mental stages of the painter. Hence saintly soul is the only fit person to be a great painter. What is devotion to a religious man, what is philosophy to a thinker, the very same is the ideal of a painter. Calmness, gravity and majestic demeanour with full amount of devotion must be developed in a person before he becomes a great painter. Hence great painters in their after life turn out to be saints."

REPORT

The birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Vedanta Centre of Boston on the evening of Sunday, February 25th, at eight o'clock. There was a large attendance. The Swami's address was on the life of this great Saint and was greatly appreciated. He spoke of His daily living, of His character; of His connection with the Temple where for so many years He worshipped God in the form of the Divine Mother. He told how, although He was unlettered, He could expound the deepest philosophy; and although He was born a Hindu Brahmin with all the rigidity of caste and religion that that implies, He realized God through the various paths of Christian, Mohammedan, dualist, monist, etc., and proclaimed from personal experience the fundamental fact that "Truth is One, men call It by various names." He was sought after by people of all castes and religions to solve their problems and answer their questions.

The Swami said: "The life of a holy person is doubly blessed because he not only brings blessing to himself, but to countless others. A holy life is like a spiritual flower bringing into the world a perfume which is so subtle and potent it permeates everywhere. Here was a poor man who lived in India, died in India, without wanting His name to be recognized, without asserting Himself in any way, and to-day He has become a world figure. He never claimed anything for Himself. He never even said He had any power. We often read in great classics and mystical literature that when people touch the Source, the Fountainhead, nothing is lacking in their lives; and it was this we find illustrated in the life of Sri Ramakrishna."

Following the address an offering was made for the poor of India. Later refreshments were served.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

APRIL, 1923

LIFE HEREAFTER

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Soul's Secret Door

By SWAMI PARAMANANDA

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There is poetry in the soul of India. Rabindranath Tagore has taught this to the western world, thanks largely to the fame and influence incident to his winning of the Nobel Prize. But there are other singers native to this country, both ancient and modern, whose voices have the authentic note of inspiration.

One of these, well known to many persons in America, is the leader of the Vedanta Centre in Boston (Massachusetts), Swami Paramananda, whose most recent publication is a volume of poetry entitled "Soul's Secret Door." Here is the calm, exalted type of spirituality which is so distinctive of Hindu thought at its best and highest. A noble mysticism, expressed in lovely, simple, lucid English phrase, is present in all these verses as at once an atmosphere and an illumination. What is there in the Hindu mind which enables these easterners to set forth these fundamental truths of the inner life, both of the soul and of the universe in which the soul has its abode, with a candor and clarity which altogether escape the intracies of meaningless abstraction into which our western minds so easily tumble when they attempt to grapple with the infinite? And what is the secret of the sheer beauty in which this mind surely clothes its thought?

"Soul's Secret Door" reminds the western reader of "Gitanjali," and other writings of Tagore, but only as Longfellow would remind the eastern reader of Lowell and Whittier. East is east and west is west, after all! But behind this common cadence of the soul is originality, seeking its own thought by its own right and its own way. We append one of the poems, ("My Lowly Cottage") that our readers may taste this book in anticipation of feeding upon it.—*John Haynes Holmes, Unity, Chicago.*

The contemplative mood of the Hindu psalms in the Swami Paramananda's book, "Soul's Secret Door," is characteristically Oriental. All sing the oneness of the soul with and in God. Some of these hymns reprove the material character of our times. The book sheds an almost tonic sense of peace and repose.—*Evening Post, New York.*

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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LIFE HEREAFTER

By Swami Paramananda

"The curtains of yesterday drop down, the curtains of to-morrow roll up; but yesterday and to-morrow both are. Believe what thou findest written in the sanctuaries of man's soul, even as all thinkers, in all ages, have devoutly read it there."—(*Carlyle.*) If we let our life here be covered by the veil of unknowing, then the same veil will inevitably cover our sight after death. Life hereafter is not enshrouded with so much mystery as we imagine. The skeptical man will say, as he has always said, that there is no conclusive proof of an after life, that it is wholly a matter of speculation. We are not fair when we ask for a material proof where matter does not exist. If we want spiritual proof, then we must awaken that part in us which transcends matter. It is indeed the Spirit that gives us the power to see, but if we limit our vision to the physical, if we judge everything from the viewpoint of material experience, then we can never come to any definite understanding in regard to the higher realms of life.

In spite of all our advancement in scientific realms, there are people even to-day who try to uphold the idea that before this life there was nothing, that we have been created out of nothing. Both science and philosophy, however, are in one accord, that it is impossible for something to come out of nothing. Yet

man, because he is not able to see clearly in the realm of spiritual existence, often accepts and clings to that which is illogical rather than investigate and try to awaken within himself the seeing faculty. "There is no existence for the unreal and the real can never be non-existent. Know That to be indestructible by which all this is pervaded. No one is ever able to destroy that Immutable. These bodies are perishable, but the dwellers in these bodies are eternal, indestructible and imperishable. The soul is never born, nor does it die, nor once having been does it go into non-being. The soul is unborn, eternal, changeless. The dweller in the body of every man is ever indestructible. Therefore thou shouldst not grieve over any creature." What a wonderful picture this is which the Bhagavad-Gita gives of the majesty of the soul. It is the heritage of every man. If we believe in it, it will bring us definite and conclusive proof of our immortal life here and will remove all doubt in regard to our life hereafter.

In this world we are so busy trying to eliminate evil. We seek to make people better, to bring greater happiness into their lives; but what will bring them greater happiness? What will give them the power to counteract evil? It is life always which overcomes death. If we want to overcome disease and affliction, let us fill ourselves with life. The voice of Truth always tells us that we are already filled with the essence of life. Know it and discard all that is not life. We rise to great heights when we know more of this inner life and when we cease to identify ourselves with our physical body and our material surroundings, and direct our thoughts to that which is beyond, which underlies our life and is the background of every living being.

But there is always the other point of view reminding us constantly that we must not risk our happiness and prosperity by looking for something which is indefinite and not tangible.

This snare of the soul, entangling the individual with the notion "let us eat, drink and be merry" while the opportunities last, is probably one of the most difficult obstacles to surmount and the outcome of this attitude is always disastrous. It blindfolds our higher vision and limits us to a narrower sphere of immediate physical life and desire. As long as man adheres to this viewpoint, he cannot free his mind from evil propensities. If a man does not believe in continued existence and progress, what will prevent him from gratifying his selfish desires by wrong means? But when the higher understanding fills our heart, we realize that our action here invariably paves the road for our life hereafter. Usually people imagine that there is a recording angel keeping record of our good and evil deeds, but we are our own recording angel. Even the things that we do in the dark, no one else may see or know them, but we are fully aware of them. They leave their imprint so vividly upon our thoughts that when we want to forget them, we are not able to. If we have harmed some one, if we have cheated or robbed some one, the thought of it haunts us. It deprives us of our freedom. It prevents our happiness. This law of just compensation which governs our life here will also control our destiny in the after-life.

Life hereafter is not a visionary dream. We need not think that whatever we may do here or however we may live, we shall all go to heaven after death. If heaven is a place full of beauty, divine atmosphere and peace, then it stands to reason that we must fit ourselves for it. We must earn the right to take our place there. One who does not try to unite himself with heavenly things through his life and action here will find himself entirely out of place in heaven. We see this verified in our every-day life. If we are given an opportunity to come in contact with something which is beyond us and which our mind cannot grasp, we are unable to take any interest in that. Simi-

larly heaven will not prove a real haven of rest and peace for those who have not within themselves the right attitude. We must try to cultivate our taste for higher things now in this life if we expect to enjoy them after the life here. This world is a training school and in this training school any one who shrinks or shuns and thinks that he may bribe Divinity and escape his misdeeds is much mistaken.

There is no arbitrary power which is holding its rod of threat over us, but we punish ourselves. No one can deprive us of our blessings as much as we can deprive ourselves. Life gives us opportunities; and it is in this life, through its blessings and by well-directed and constructive action, that we build our bridge which takes us across to the other shore. If we live in doubt and darkness now, when the time comes for us to leave the body, in that moment of pain which often accompanies ordinary death, we shall have only darkness to carry with us, but if a man fills his consciousness with the light of understanding, then not only does that light not fail him at the hour of death, but it does not fail him at any time. Death loses all its horror, for the light always brightens our path. What a marvellous idea the Gita gives of this death concerning which the world feels such mystery and melancholy:—"As man casts off worn-out garments and puts on others which are new, similarly the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies, enters into others which are new." We are all eager for greater opportunities; but only as our bodies and minds evolve can we make use of such opportunities.

From very ancient times the Indo-Aryans have known that this gross body of ours is not all; there is another, a subtler body, less destructible than this physical body and more potent, composed of mind, intellect and the sense of ego. It is just like a sheath which holds the soul. After death the soul of the individual still continues to live in this body along with all that

he has accumulated, both good and bad. He must carry this with him until he has reaped the full harvest. He it was who did the sowing, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, and he it is who must do the reaping. Every individual has the power to make his own choice. This life is a harvest-field. The man who is industrious, who ploughs his field in the right season, who sows his seed and watches over it, can look upon the fruit of his labor with a sense of satisfaction. Do not think that we can have a rich harvest by accident. There is no such thing as accident in the cosmic universe. A man does not accidentally receive a blessing. Even if he did, he would not know how to retain it. When out of charity we give to the undeserving, we find that somehow or other they manage to come back to their original poverty.

Our defective mentality, our bondage, our distorted vision,—these are the natural products of our thoughts and deeds. Thoughts and actions cause our bondage, also they free us. We cannot afford to take a negligent attitude. We all need a spiritual background. We need a bigger, more lasting faith in ourselves. Without this man can never progress. It is with this that we rise; it is with this that we face all our difficulties. It has infinite healing! A man who really believes that his soul is immortal and indestructible, he rises above his physical ailments. You may say all these ideas of the soul and its immortality are nothing but imagination. There are good imaginations and bad ones. It is better to imagine lofty things; it is better to cling to high ideals, because in this way we enrich ourselves. What we think, that we become. Our whole future life depends on what we are doing now. We are either building a bridge which will take us across, or we are breaking it down.

There are some people who are rebellious when they see injustice in the world. But this injustice is man's own creation.

He brings it upon himself. Also he can redeem himself. No power can hamper us if we lift up our head and have this bigger point of view. There is a law working; and when we learn to work in perfect harmony and rhythm with that law, nothing can thwart us; if we try to go against it, we defeat ourselves. We cannot break the law, we only break ourselves. What is the consequence when a man foolishly tries to go against a locomotive? He is crushed; but if he knows how to utilize its power he can derive benefit through it. The same is true of our life. When we learn to join our forces harmoniously with this irresistible machine of life, it works for our upbuilding. If we try to oppose it, we cannot avoid the consequences.

Out of our ignorance we think we can find a short cut to happiness, but at every turn we are shown that there is no such short cut. What is ours will come to us; if it does not come to-day it will come to-morrow. Have you not faith in to-morrow? If you have faith in to-morrow, then you must have faith in life hereafter, because it means that. This life is to-day and what comes after is to-morrow; and to-day and to-morrow will always remain incomplete unless we also add yesterday; because what we are to-day is the product of yesterday, and to-morrow we can look forward to if we are putting everything to right use to-day. This may seem like a poetic picture, but it is not. If we put to right use our efforts, our energies, our thoughts, with clear vision to-day, I do not think that our efforts will fail to bring us a brighter to-morrow. We do not take a chance with our life here. A man who is very keen for success from the business point of view does not take any chances; he stores up his bank account and makes all kinds of provision for his life in the future. A wise man also makes provision for life hereafter. This does not necessitate our neglecting this life. On the contrary, if we take the proper care

of this life, if we utilize every blessing in the right way, with understanding, with steadfast devotion to our ideals, we shall build up our future even unconsciously.

When we know our real self we cannot stoop down below our level. It is only when we do not know our real worth, when we feel oppressed by the material situation, that we take to all kinds of unworthy devices because of our weakness. When we know our power, these evil means never occur to us; we never turn to them, nor can they find any access to our heart. So the light of the soul should fill our mind and our heart, our brain and our body. It is by that we live; but when we live without knowing that it is this power that sustains us, we do not make full use of our life. The conscious possession of one's eternal and immortal nature is the greatest possession.

We may think these are not practical ideas. They are practical ideas. They are so very practical that we cannot live without them. As we begin to think of these things, as we begin to put them into our life, even though the whole world may not understand, it will not matter. The world should not be our standard; we should make the standard for the world, even if we have to stand alone. But we shall not have to stand alone long because people are hungry for these truths. They may not always know it, but they are seeking; even when they blunder, it is because they are seeking. But we cannot give anything to those who are hungry until we have found the right food of the Spirit. Spiritual life is not following some creed, it is evolving the consciousness of Spirit within us, and that does not come accidentally. What we think, what we believe, what we work for, that we evolve; and if we evolve this consciousness of Spirit now before we are separated from this physical body, we shall carry it with us. The light will always go before us and when we walk by that light we shall not find any darkness either in this life or in the life hereafter.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Some look upon It (Soul) with wonder, some speak about It with wonder, some hear about It with wonder and yet others, even after hearing about It, know It not. The dweller in the body of everyone is ever indestructible; therefore, O Bharata, thou shouldst not grieve over any creature.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

There are two kinds of existence, the one visible, the other invisible. And the invisible is unchanging, while the visible is always changing.—*Plato.*

The truly spiritual see Spirit as Spirit, not as matter. It is Spirit that makes nature move, it is the reality in nature, so action is in nature, not in the Spirit. Spirit is always the same, changeless, eternal. Spirit and matter are in reality the same, but Spirit, as such, never becomes matter, and matter, as such, never becomes Spirit.—*Swami Vivekananda.*

We cannot describe the natural history of the soul, but we know that it is divine. I cannot tell if these wonderful qualities which house to-day in this mortal frame shall ever reassemble in equal activity in a similar frame . . . but this one thing I know, that these qualities did not now begin to exist, cannot be sick with my sickness, nor buried in my grave.—*Emerson.*

The holy oracles always represent Paradise as our native country, and our present life as an exile. How can we be said to have been banished from a place in which we never were? This argument alone would suffice to convince us of pre-existence.—*Chevalier Ramsay. Early 18th century.*

And thou son, who through thy mortal weight shalt again return below.—*Dante.*

Call with devotion upon His Hallowed Name and the mountain of your sins will disappear, just as a mountain of

cotton will burn up and vanish if it but catches one spark of fire.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

Spring redeems winter's devastation. Crucifixion finds its crowning in resurrection. What may seem tragic in our life at one time has its counterpart in another expression of the same life. It we can learn to wait our turn with ungrudging patience and watchful vigil, we shall find to our amazement how the long and short days of summer and winter are but pleasant pastimes for our soul, to renew and refresh her. Does not nature hold vividly before us the picture of restoration?—*Swami Paramananda.*

THE WORLD

By Jalaluddin Rumi

The lovers of the All are not the lovers of the part.
He who loves the part falls short of the All.
When the part loves the part
Too soon its loved object flits away into the All.
He stands forlorn among strangers
His arm becomes palsied and he dies.
The creature flies to the Creator and he is left behind.
The rose-odour flies to the rose and the thorn is left behind.
Like the fool who sees the sunshine
Gleam on the wall and becomes thunder-struck at the sight;
He loves the wall, for he saith, "Here is the true brightness."
He knows not that it is but the reflection of the sun;
And when the sunbeam returns thither whence it came
He sees the dark wall standing alone in its place;
While he himself remains afar from his desires
With a lost purpose and an empty aim and a weary foot.

THE SOUL

From Hermes Trismegistus.

(Egyptian Teaching. Date Unknown.)

The soul is, then, incorporal essence; for if it should have body, it would no longer have the power of being self-maintained. For every body needeth being; it needeth also ordered life as well.

For every thing that comes to birth change also must succeed. For that which doth become becomes in size; for in becoming it hath increase. Again, for every thing that doth increase decrease succeedeth; and on decrease destruction.

It is the soul that doth supply this intellectual life. It is called living through the life and rational through the intellect and mortal through the body.

Soul is, accordingly, a thing incorporal, possessing in itself the power of freedom from all change.

For how would it be possible to talk about an intellectual living thing, if that there were no living essence to furnish intellectual life?

Soul then is essence containing its own end within itself; in its beginning taking to itself the way of life allotted it by Fate, it draws also unto itself a reason like to matter, possessing "heart" and "appetite."

"Heart" too is matter; if it doth make its state accordant with the soul's intelligence, it then becometh courage, and is not led away by cowardice. And "appetite" is matter too; if it doth make its state accord with the soul's rational power, it then becometh temperance and is not moved by pleasure, for reasoning fills up the "appetite's" deficiency.

And when both these are harmonized and equalized, and both are made subordinate to the soul's rational power, justice is born. For that their state of equilibrium doth take away the "heart's" excess and equalizes the deficiency of "appetite."

The source of these, however, is the penetrating essence of all thought, its self by its own self, working in its own reason as its rule. It is the essence that doth lead and guide as ruler; its reason is as 'twere its counsellor, who thinks about all things.

The reason of the essence, then, is gnosis (knowledge) of those reasonings which furnish the irrational part with reasoning's conjecturing,—a faint thing as compared with reasoning itself, but reasoning as compared with the irrational, as echo unto voice and moonlight to the sun.

And "heart" and "appetite" are harmonized upon a rational plan; they pull the one against the other, and so they learn to know in their own selves a circular intent.

The kinds of souls are three:—divine, human and irrational.

Now the divine is that of its divine body, in which there is the making active of itself. For it is moved in it and moves itself.

For when it is set free from mortal lives, it separates itself from the irrational portions of itself, departs unto the godlike body, and as 'tis in perpetual motion, is moved in its own self with the same motion as the universe.

The human kind has also something of the godlike body, but it has joined to it as well the parts irrational,—the appetite and heart.

These latter also are immortal, in that they happen also in themselves to be activities; but they are the activities of mortal bodies.

Wherefore, they are removed far from the godlike portion of the soul, when it is in its godlike body; but when this enters in a mortal frame, they also cling to it and by the presence of these elements it keeps on being a human soul.

But that of the irrationals consist of heart and appetite. And for this cause these lives are also called irrational, through deprivation of the reason of the soul.

RECONSTRUCTION

By K. F. Sherwood

As we look about us to-day and consider the sad state into which the world seems to be plunged, let us regard also the many helps that are coming to us, among the most evident of which are the new methods of healing. There are many and they are good, so far as they effect cure. Looking into the practice of medicine, which is the conservative method, we will find that while now it treats matter with matter, "in the beginning it was not so". Long ago when disease was considered to come from the gods, to the gods also they looked for healing and the priests were the physicians. To-day it is so among the American Indians. The Medicine-man is also a kind of priest. Aesculapius is one of the first recorded by history who could be called a physician. He was called the inventor of the art of healing. Down to the time of Hippocrates some kind of magnetic sleep was induced in the patient in which he revealed his own condition; or if this failed, a state of ecstasy or trance was induced in the priest in which he revealed the method of cure.

Hippocrates (B. C. 460) was called the father of rational medicine, and it was he who brought the art of healing into the realm of science. He originated the idea of the healing power of nature which is recognized until now, but he regarded it as a spiritual principle. As the treatment of disease became more of a science, they began to make a distinction between the soul and body. In Plato's Phaedo we get the teaching of Socrates in regard to this most beautifully brought out—this distinction between soul and body with supremacy given to the soul. About the beginning of the Christian era there was a revival of the Platonic idea of a Pueuma or spirit and a medical school was founded under the name of Pneumatists whose practice was based on this principle.

W. F. Evans in his valuable book "Soul and Body" men-

tions these facts. Also he says that "after the subsidence of the Pneumatists the spiritual idea of health and disease seems to have been lost sight of in the practice of medicine," the system of Claudius Galen taking its place in the second century A. D. It was purely materialistic, but reigned supreme for 1300 years when it was disputed by Paracelsus. Evans says again, "Why in writing the history of medicine the theory and practice of Jesus the Christ is left out, it is difficult to conceive. Whatever view we take of Him, as either man or God, He was certainly the Great Physician of soul and body; and the principle on which His practice was based deserved the profoundest consideration and study. And it is certain that He employed no chemical remedies. His method of cure was psychical and not material."

The Psychical Research Society go on seeking for proof and discovering fraud, but even the miracles of Jesus are now being explained and by churchmen on a psychological basis. That which we call matter or materialization has been shown by one professor of Electro Therapeutics to be but a collection into form of particles attracted from, shall we say the air or the ether or something in which we live and move, and held in place by that more subtle form or vibration which exists on another plane which we call spirit and which is more subtle and more potent. There is a spiritual side to everything. Any material may be good in itself, but given an imperfect form according to the mind or ideal held in mind by the sculptor or painter or architect. It is in this formative laboratory that our work must be done—our work of making good and healthy bodies which are so necessary as instruments to work with.

The body by the most ancient schools of philosophy was considered as nothing—not to be considered—a no-thing, and that is what is being discerned and taught to-day by some of the new schools, and which continue despite contradiction and ridi-

cule. As in the old story of the healing of the blind man—"Whereas I was blind now I see"—many are saying who know not the cause, but note the difference in themselves, and many are trying to discover the cause and teach others that they "may sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon them." We hear the word "re-education" from some of these new teachers and healers—"reconstruction of ideas" might be a better term. They are taking their stand in connection with the more subtle body where the real trouble lies—the spiritual body—or mind body, and they are showing that fear of one kind or another is responsible for bodily ailments and faith, that "substance of the thing hoped for"—that reality out of which the new form is really made—that combination of thought and feeling which underlies the new form and supports it is a constructive force; that denial of the old idea helps to decompose it and a reconstruction takes place in the mind or subtle body and eventually that of the gross body follows the pattern.

In this new method there is every variety of treatment leading by gradual steps to the most ideal, which without knowing it has for a background that highest of all philosophies, the Monism of the Indo-Aryan. Spirit is all and I am that, says the monist. All that we cognize by the senses is unreal—Maya—no existence of itself. Of this unreal world our bodies are a part. We know them only through or by the same senses with which we contact the whole external world and at first we say this is "I." Even those senses are not body. We identify ourselves with it and fall into delusion, the great teachers tell us, but we must say "no, this is not I. I am one with the Father, the great creative Principle. I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute." Where is there any room for inharmony or disease in that realm of perfection? If we could but realize this if only for a few moments at a time our outer bodies would fall into line and express the same perfection, un-

less we at the same time are clinging to false ideas that exist in our subconsciousness and which will express themselves by the same law. This is the Sun of Righteousness which rises with healing in His wings, a real and lasting healing both for the body and the soul, not a temporary healing of the body only, but a reconstruction that is lasting, that while it is not all that could be done, yet it starts us in the right path from which we must take care not to fall away. Our bodies exist in us, not we in our bodies; that is, our conception of what our bodies are is in our mind, and our mind is greater than can be confined in this body. A part of our consciousness is there, but only a part and a small part. As we grow in this thought and live by it and act upon it we may one day expand our consciousness until we really know what we are and that we are one with all that is. Till then let us not be deceived. Let us see through this outward appearance to the real which is within. As St. Paul said, "Now we see through a glass darkly, then face to face. Now we know in part, then shall we know as we are known." This has been thought to refer to after the death of the body, but why wait? We live in that Spirit world now, but our eyes are holden. There is no doubt about it except for those who always live in doubt. Christ said, "If one rose from the dead ye would not believe." That is as true to-day as then. Human nature is the same. Only those who have faith, that "evidence of things not seen" that wish to believe, that combination of hope of the mind and desire of the heart built on some knowledge of the great possibilities of life, only they get what they are looking for.

Doubt is death. Faith is constructive and as a power of thought can reconstruct on the plane where life really is according to the pattern held in mind. This is what Coue means by the imagination, the imaging faculty which makes the pattern, and he says, "Mark those three important words—'in every

way,' and what does that mean? It means in *every* way." Does he not subtly suggest that it is in soul as well as body that we are to get better and better? "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." Has he not pointed us to the principle which underlies healing whenever it occurs, not only healing but disease? We are constantly making an auto-suggestion and affirming something in regard to ourselves, usually on the external plane, and the result of some feeling or sensation from which we draw wrong conclusions. At such times we should remember that we are primarily mind functioning in a form that we call body. Let us get if we can a new idea of body. It is very important. It will be to us exactly as we think it. Some one has said, "The body does not feel—we feel—the body vibrates." There is evidently something external to what we know as ourselves and we get our idea of it from sensations received in our sensorium. That sensorium exists in our mind body, not the material body, and from those sensations we form our idea of body.

Some one will say, "But how do you know?" Suppose we do not know. That which we have thought we knew has not been a complete success. Let us try something new even if only an hypothesis. Let us make it "X", our unknown quantity, and work out our problem until we find the real meaning of "X." Then perhaps we will know and by experience which is the only sure way. But we must have faith, which is the "substance of the thing hoped for." That is necessary. That faith can be cultivated by placing it first on something that we can perceive as true, no matter how small. It will grow by exercise according to the law of growth. In the face of all that we see around us that is discouraging, we can surely find something of the opposite in which we can have faith, and thus reconstruct our ideas in every line getting a better understanding that will lead us to right activity of mind and body and get-

ting rid of false notions that are holding us from a state of real health keeping the thought that we are spirits not bodies. This will be a real springtime for us, a renewal of life and we can better appreciate what is meant by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings. But we must remember the promise is to "you who fear or think upon my name."

TRANQUILLITY OF SPIRIT

Spiritual Maxims of St. John of the Cross

Live in this world as if God and your soul only were in it; that your heart may be a captive to no earthly thing.

Do not weary yourself to no purpose, nor seek spiritual joy and sweetness, unless it be by denying yourself in that which you aim at.

Be interiorly detached from all things, and do not set your affection upon any temporal things, and your soul will gather in a harvest of blessings beyond its comprehension.

The goods of God, which are beyond all measure, can be contained only in an empty and solitary heart.

So far as it lies in your power, refuse nothing asked of you, though you may have need of it yourself.

He will never attain to perfection who will not labour to be satisfied with this: that all his natural and spiritual desires should be satisfied in the absence of everything which is not God. This is most necessary for abiding peace and tranquillity of spirit.

Let your soul be always ordered by a desire not for that which is easy, but for that which is most difficult; not for that which is most pleasant, but for that which is most unpleasant; not for that which is elevated and precious, but for that which is vile and despised; not for great things, but for little things; not to seek for anything, but to seek for nothing; not for that

which is best, but for that which is worst; desiring to enter, for the love of Jesus, upon detachment, emptiness, and poverty in everything in this world.

If you will cleanse your soul of strange possessions and desires, you will understand all things spiritually; and if you will restrain yourself from setting your heart upon them, you will rejoice truly in them, and understand them certainly.

All people will be your servants, and all things will minister to you, if only you will forget them and yourself.

You will never have to do with necessities greater than those to which you made your heart yield itself; for the poor in spirit are most happy and joyous in a state of privation; and he who has set his heart upon no thing, finds fullness everywhere.

The poor in spirit give generously all they have, and their pleasure consists in being thus deprived of everything for God's sake, and out of love to their neighbour, ordering all things by the law of this virtue.

Poverty of spirit looks to the substance of devotion solely, and making use only of what is sufficient for it, is weary of the multiplicity and curiosity of visible means.

A soul withdrawn from exterior things, detached from its own will, even in divine things, will not be raised by prosperity nor subdued by adversity.

The poor that are naked shall be clothed: and the soul that will strip itself of all its desires, likings, and dislikings, God will clothe with His own purity, His own joy, and His own will.

The love of God in a pure and simple soul, detached from every desire, is frequently in act.

Restrain your desires, and you will find that which your heart longs for: how can you tell that your desire is according to the will of God?

Not only do temporal goods, the delights and the tastes of

sense, hinder and thwart the way of God, but spiritual delights and consolations also, if sought for, or clung to eagerly, disturb the way of virtue.

WORKING FOR THE LORD

From Letter of Swami Turiyananda

Man is but the instrument and the Lord is the manipulator of it. Blessed is he through whom He gets His work done. Every one has to work in this world, no one can avoid working; but one who works for selfish ends, work, instead of liberating him, adds fresh bondage. The intelligent man works for the Lord, breaks through the fetters of work, and enjoys the bliss of *Mukti* (liberation). Not I, but He; He is the agent: this knowledge severs all bonds. And this is the eternal truth. The notion that I am the doer is merely a delusion. It is difficult to trace what the ego is. If we carefully analyze the ego, it ultimately melts in Him. Our identification with the body, mind and intellect, etc., is merely a delusion created by nescience; they do not survive till the end. Analysis puts an end to them all. They all go, and there only remains the One Reality from whom all things proceed, in whom they rest, and into whom they merge at the end.

That Reality is the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, the Witness of the ego-consciousness; and again, It is the omnipresent Lord who is creating, preserving and destroying the universe, yet is untouched by it all. This machine of a universe rests in Him and is working through His power. The ever playful Lord is watching His play and enjoying it. He only unto whom He unfolds this secret understands it, while others cannot understand it even though they hear of it. They consider themselves apart from Him and fall under delusion. This is His Maya. This Maya vanishes if one works surrendering himself unto Him. The doer then understands that he

is not the doer, but only an instrument. This is what is called inaction in the midst of action. This is realizing oneself as not doing anything—this is liberation in this life.

It is with a view to enjoy the bliss of this liberation in life that the soul takes up a body; otherwise it goes against reason that the eternally free soul can ever be born for the purpose of enjoying sense-pleasures. The ultimate goal of human life is the realization of one's being above the body-idea, even though possessed of this body. Realizing this, man attains the consummation of his life. Our sincere prayer to the Lord is that we may through His grace attain to that bliss of liberation in this life in this very birth; that this life may be our last life, that is to say, that we may not have to take up another body for the fulfillment of any selfish ends; that He may give us in this very life the conviction, the realization that our life is for Him and for nothing else. May the Lord be propitious to us!

ALTAR-FLOWER

By Swami Paramananda

Altar-flower, I have watched thee with deepest wonderment.
Thou fragrant beauty of delicate loveliness,
Thou hast given thine all.
Now thou art fading.
Art thou dead?
Nay, thou art risen to thy glory;
Thou art ascended!
Thy immortal soul of sweet perfume
Hath risen to the throne of thy Lord.
Thou art no more separate from Him.
Thy humble heart hath taught me a holy secret,—
Yea, thou hast given thine all.

REVIEWS

SOUL'S SECRET DOOR

(We give here below the exact copy of review by Sam. T. Clover which appeared on February 10th, 1923, under the heading of "Cream of Current Poetry" in "Saturday Night," leading weekly of the Pacific Coast.)

To those specialized readers in touch with the publications issued from the Vedanta Centre, at Boston, the works of Swami Paramananda are well known for their beautiful simplicity, their sincerity and fine spiritual quality. These attributes are so markedly evident in his latest book of poems, the "Soul's Secret Door," that they should make appeal to a far wider circle, to a humanity which rises above all creeds and denominations, finding in these outpourings of a soul a reflection of unspoken self-communion as earnest as they are divinely fresh, simple, yet profound.

Not from the mind in daily contact with the money-changers, the barterers of commerce could such ecstatic poems emanate. Of necessity, they are from within, apart, introspective and adorational. This singleness of purpose thus evinced is the resultant of years of segregated living, thinking and sanctification. If, at times, we question the self-immurement of the ascetic, the value of such intense devotions to a sin-tossed world, in outpourings such as these is revealed their worth to mute souls physically, as well as mentally, unable to express their heart longings.

It is not a revengeful or jealous God before whom Swami Paramananda prostrates himself, as "Worship" discloses:

> "Wouldst thou worship the High, the Holy?
> Then strip thyself of this garment of self and put on
> a fresh vestment of humility.
> Why art thou fearful and trembling?
> He is not a God of revenge.
> Cast off thy false belief and let Him fill thee anew.

Contrast this creed with that sung with such acclaim by our progenitors who lustily shouted, while their women-folk, doubtless, trembled:

God the omnipotent, mighty avenger,
Watching invisible, judging unheard.

Neither a God of wrath nor yet a God of terror is the one whose shrine is behind the secret door of this poet, but a tender Lord, whose magic charm has dissipated past wretchedness, who is ever merciful to the lowly, to paraphrase from the "Unceasing Giver." It will be at once asserted by the orthodox-minded that the poet's God is in nowise more attractive, more gracious than the one so beautifully expressed in that sweet old hymn, "Dennis":

How gentle God's commands
How kind His precepts are.

Which is, of course, true and gives point to the further reflection that these poems contain the seed of all beliefs, hence will be as precious manna to the hungry soul. What could be more sympathetic in treatment than "Silence," beginning:

Hush! This is the hour of silence
When soul seeks its refreshment.

or, "Be Thou Patient," with its fine poise and vision:

Brother, thy load is heavy and thou art weary;
But One who has placed the load upon thy head will
also give thee strength to carry it.

"Harvest," "Ecstacy," "Restoration" and "Surrender" are exquisite psalms of spiritual light, for that is what these poems of the Swami's suggest. One last quatrain must be permitted from, "My Sleep is Ended":

The resonance of Thy voice roused me
Who was slumbering in idle dreams.
My waking was only for a moment,
But Thou hast wrought a strange miracle within my
soul.
Now even in sleep I find something in me always
awake and watching.
That which Thou hast roused in me can sleep no more.

As companion on the bedside table to Thomas à Kepmis' "Imitation of Christ," to Amiel's Journal and the New Testament may be safely recommended the "Soul's Secret Door" for those meditatively and devoutly inclined.

THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

"The Eastern Buddhist," issued by The Eastern Buddhist Society, Kyoto, Japan, is devoted to the study of Mahayana Buddhism. We are happy to note that since the first publication of this magazine in May, 1921, it has published many scholarly articles in its various issues on what is Mahayana Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Shin-Shu Buddhism, and also the development of Buddhism in India. It shows the literary and religious activities among the Buddhist scholars in Japan. Such a publication is not only helpful as religious literature, but it is specially valuable in the field of broader education and comparative study. We heartily welcome this magazine and wish it all possible success. We quote from one of the articles:

"What is Mahayana Buddhism? Why do we have more than one Buddhism? Why should Buddhism be divided into Northern and Southern, or Mahayana and Hinayana? We might ask as well, Why is Christianity divided? For in Christianity do we not find the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Church, and the Protestant Church with all its different sects? Yet all of these different branches and sects assert Christ as the mainspring of their religious life and claim to interpret the spirit of their faith and to derive from Christ's teachings the basis of their tenets of belief. It is exactly the same in Buddhism. Just as Christianity has changed according to the different periods of time and peoples with whom it has come in contact, so has the primitive Buddhism received new developments as different minds reflected and studied the Buddhist teachings. All these sects and schools of Buddhism, however, claim the Buddha as their inspiration and believe that in their teaching and presentation the spirit of the Buddha is reflected and that the kernel of thought is developed but not radically changed.

"When the Buddha was alive, he preached for many long

years, but like Christ he wrote nothing himself, and his sermons and discourses were not written down until one hundred years after his death. The monks of the Southern school who wrote in Pali soon began to emphasize the ethical teaching of the Buddha and did not develop the metaphysical and speculative elements.

"Later when Buddhism was brought to China and later still to Japan, the teaching was still further developed into what we may call Eastern Buddhism. There are certain differences in these schools of Buddhism, but there are also a great many points of similarity, and as mentioned before they all claim that the great Buddha Shakyamuni himself was the inspirer of their doctrine, and to represent the spirit of the Buddha's teaching, if not always the letter of what is sometimes called primitive Buddhism."

REPORT

During the first three Sundays of March it was necessary for Swami Paramananda to be absent from Boston, but the usual services at the Chapel of the Vedanta Centre were conducted by one of his assistants. During this short interval Swami visited Utica, Syracuse, Buffalo, Cincinnati and Los Angeles. All his lectures were warmly received. On every occasion he was urged to read from his new book of poems, "Soul's Secret Door." They met with deep appreciation everywhere; but special enthusiasm was shown for the poems of his unpublished second volume, from which he also read and which will soon go to press. While in Los Angeles Swami lectured in Hollywood and Altadena, as well as in Los Angeles, but his visit was chiefly directed towards procuring a suitable Peace Retreat as an extension of his work in Boston. A remarkable piece of property in the arms of the Sierra Madre mountains covering 135 acres was secured. It is declared to be one of the most beautiful spots in southern California. A detailed account of it will be given in the next number of the Message.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

MAY, 1923

HEALING IN MEDITATION

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Soul's Secret Door

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There is poetry in the soul of India. Rabindranath Tagore has taught this to the western world, thanks largely to the fame and influence incident to his winning of the Nobel Prize. But there are other singers native to this country, both ancient and modern, whose voices have the authentic note of inspiration.

One of these, well known to many persons in America, is the leader of the Vedanta Centre in Boston (Massachusetts), Swami Paramananda, whose most recent publication is a volume of poetry entitled "Soul's Secret Door." Here is the calm, exalted type of spirituality which is so distinctive of Hindu thought at its best and highest. A noble mysticism, expressed in lovely, simple, lucid English phrase, is present in all these verses as at once an atmosphere and an illumination. What is there in the Hindu mind which enables these easterners to set forth these fundamental truths of the inner life, both of the soul and of the universe in which the soul has its abode, with a candor and clarity which altogether escape the intracies of meaningless abstraction into which our western minds so easily tumble when they attempt to grapple with the infinite? And what is the secret of the sheer beauty in which this mind surely clothes its thought?

"Soul's Secret Door" reminds the western reader of "Gitanjali," and other writings of Tagore, but only as Longfellow would remind the eastern reader of Lowell and Whittier. East is east and west is west, after all! But behind this common cadence of the soul is originality, seeking its own thought by its own right and its own way. We append one of the poems, ("My Lowly Cottage") that our readers may taste this book in anticipation of feeding upon it.—*John Haynes Holmes, Unity, Chicago.*

The contemplative mood of the Hindu psalms in the Swami Paramananda's book, "Soul's Secret Door," is characteristically Oriental. All sing the oneness of the soul with and in God. Some of these hymns reprove the material character of our times. The book sheds an almost tonic sense of peace and repose.—*Evening Post, New York.*

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.
Published monthly except in August and September

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HEALING POWER OF MEDITATION

By Swami Paramananda

Whenever we are in trouble physically, or distressed mentally, we seek for help in the outside world, but very seldom we think that there is already within us the most potent and infallible remedy. Meditation opens to us such a source of remedy. It has a decided healing power both over body and mind, but unfortunately the majority of people regard it as a negative state, entirely aloof from our every-day, active life. But it is not so. It is the greatest creative force within us. Consciously and unconsciously we all make use of it. There are certain thoughts which have a hold upon us; we cannot get away from their influence; but whether our meditation is voluntary or involuntary our mind always takes the imprint of our thoughts. Whenever we are able to keep our mind connected for any length of time with something beautiful and restful, we feel refreshed. A tired person coming in contact with nature becomes rested just by looking at the trees, the flowers and the birds. It is not that he has actually taken anything away from nature. Nature still stands intact, but the thought has lifted him from his tired bodily conditions and restored him.

People are always striving to avoid physical and ner-

When we are in physical or mental trouble, it is well to forget it sometimes. In the world, when we have any perplexing problem we say: "I want to think it over, I want to sleep on it." In other words we wish to reflect, to find a clear light before we give our decision. That is exactly what meditation means. The body requires a certain amount of inward recreation which the mind can give. Body and mind, when united, find balance, a sense of rest within. Retired from all worldly disturbance they both grow stronger. Whether we are in public life or following some line of spiritual study, we cannot do without these times of retirement. The nervous disorders of modern life are due not so much to our intensity of action as to our lack of understanding, the wrong direction of our energy. We must have balance, and meditation gives us that balance. Without it we cannot maintain our health, our happiness or our peace of mind. One person in a household who maintains his balance becomes a great power. He helps even unconsciously. In this day it is hard for us to believe that any one can instruct without speaking. We believe more in noise than in silence; that is our misfortune. We miss the subtler, the finer, the more beautiful part of life when we merely follow the noisy trend of the world.

In India it has been proved by practice that those who live in rhythm, who have a sense of inner values, are naturally possessed of a meditative mind. They go through life without showing any strain. Sometimes they live many years without wrinkles or any sign of old age. For what causes wrinkles? Wrong meditation; that is, a continual dwelling on anxieties and worries. We may feel that we have very good reason to be anxious, to worry; but have we ever gained anything through it except marred

physical health, disturbed mental peace and an atmosphere of unrest, which others feel? Meditation is the means by which we can control both body and mind and keep them turned in the right direction, so that even when we have reason for disturbance we can quickly adjust and detach ourselves. This is most refreshing. When we are very tired and feel that we have almost come to the breaking point, it is an excellent practice to take a deep breath and close our eyes for a few moments. But it does not do any good to go through these outer forms if our mind is wandering somewhere. If, however, the mind at the same time can be fixed on a beautiful thought, then both body and mind will feel revived.

It never does us any good to dwell on our ills and ailments, either physical or mental. But great help comes by being able to rise above them. Do not think that we can always do this through mental calculation. We may understand our philosophy perfectly in theory, but the practical application is quite a different thing. If, however, we can apply it practically, we not only rid ourselves of our troubles, we create an atmosphere of peace even in the midst of unrest. There lies the value of noble lives, of people who do not merely theorize, but who live their ideals and radiate them. We can all do the same, but we must do it very quietly. We are more successful when we are quiet about it. On this one point there is a great difference between the Oriental and the Occidental point of view. When an Easterner conceives an idea he goes into retirement. "How selfish!" you may say; "he should come forth and preach it to the world." But he wants first to gain direct and absolute knowledge of it. He is not content to take a truth because he has heard it from some one else. He wishes to verify it and make it his

own, so first he meditates upon it and then he acts.

Most people act first and think afterwards. It is a dangerous thing to do. We cannot reverse the order in this way in our daily life and expect something heavenly. That is not possible. Keep your inner and your outer life in unison. When these two are flowing in one current without any cross currents, then indeed we have reached a great height. We should strive to do this so that we may maintain rhythm and harmony within ourselves, and never contradict ourselves. How often you remark: "I did not intend to say that." But if you did not intend to say it and yet your mouth uttered it, that is a terrible defeat. It means you have not the meditative habit by which you can completely adjust your life.

Every particle of our body can be brought so absolutely into rhythm that nothing can go out of harmony. You may say that is not possible in this world of chaos. It seems hopeless; we have many obstacles, but that makes it all the more necessary for us to have this inward practice. We do it in our mind, on the street car, walking along a crowded thoroughfare, on the railroad train, wherever we may be. No one should be able to disturb our thoughts, no one should have any control over our minds, but in order that our mind may be absolutely master of the situation, we need to form the habit of meditation,—meditation on the beautiful, meditation on the true. We should ally ourselves as often as we can and as constantly with the Unbounded and the Infinite. In the Upanishads we are taught that in That which is infinite and unbounded lies happiness, real strength and the fulfillment of life. When we are able to look up to That, not only sometimes but always, we live happily. Can we have any real fullness of life if we are separated from the very

root of our existence? Have you ever seen a flower or a branch of a tree survive when it is severed from the root? It is not possible. Meditation teaches us how we may keep ourselves united with the Source of our life. This is our heritage. No one should ever regard himself as so sinful, so degraded and so benighted as not to have access to this Source. It is through our mental distortion that we think we have drifted from the Source, that we are weak, impure and selfish, that we have nothing. We have everything. We are the descendants of the infinite, all-beautiful, all-living Spirit. The more we can form the habit of thinking of this, the greater will grow our inward power. Then we can easily cope with all the little things of life. At no moment shall we feel at a loss. At no moment shall we feel that we have to rob any one or cheat another to gain our happiness, because we ourselves shall have so much that it will not only suffice for our own life, but we will be able to share it with others gladly and abundantly.

PRAYER AND MEDITATION

By Katharine F. Sherwood

In prayer, O Lord, my thoughts to Thee ascend.
In prayer, O Lord, my knee to Thee I bend.
In meditation, Lord, my thought I stay
That I may hear Thy voice and know Thy way.

In prayer, O Lord, I am a thing apart,
Though worshipping with all the mind and heart.
In meditation, Lord, the self is gone.
Conscious of Thee alone, the two are one.

WALK WHILE YE HAVE LIGHT

From Spiritual Letters of Fenelon. 17th Century

The Greatness and Goodness of God should be a frequent subject of your meditation; but you should not try to meditate without taking some special words, in order to fix your mind, which has been little accustomed to abide calmly in God's Presence; you will otherwise only lose your time without strengthening your heart. You should always have a definite, plain, simple subject, on which you should reflect simply. Ask chiefly to be drawn to God through the affections, for it is not by intellectual processes or arguments that He wins souls; it is by the quickening of the heart and the humbling of the spirit. Do not hope to attain to a point in which your meditations will be free from distraction,—it is not possible; but try rather to make use of your distractions by bearing them with humble patience, never being discouraged. Every time you find them out, turn yourself quietly to God again. Anxiety concerning your distractions is the worst distraction of all.

I would have you always on your guard against haughtiness, self-trust, over-decision in speech. Be gentle and humble in heart, by which I mean that your gentle manner should spring from real humility; harshness and want of consideration always come from pride, and he who would grow milder must learn to humble himself from the bottom of his heart. A humble heart is always kind and pliable at bottom, even when the outside is rough owing to a naturally brusque manner. Watch, pray, labour, bear with yourself without self-flattery. Let your reading and prayer tend to enlighten you as to your faults, to correct them, and to overcome your natural disposition through God's help.

Only a word, dear son, to urge candour more and more upon you, and that you avoid self-seeking, which is the cause of most of your troubles and faults. The simpler you are, the more docile and pliable you will be; and to be this effectually you should be so towards all who find fault with you out of charity. It is very acceptable in God's sight when one is always willing to be blamed, despised, corrected.

Be kindly, without pride or imperiousness, censoriousness, disdain, fastidiousness, or any other token of self-conceit. Be true and frank in spite of yourself. Be steadfast in thwarting your vanity and the sensitiveness of self-love directly that God points them out to you. "Walk while ye have light, that ye may be the children of light." I pray that God may make you gentle, lowly, and childlike.

MIRACLE OF FAITH

Parable by Sri Ramakrishna

A milk-maid used to supply milk to a Brahmin priest living on the other side of the river. Owing to the irregularities of boat service, she could not supply it punctually every day. Once being rebuked for her lateness, the poor woman said, "What can I do, Sir? I start early from my house but have to wait a long time at the river bank for the boatman and the passengers." The priest said, "Woman! they cross the ocean of life by uttering the name of God and canst thou not cross this little river?" The simple-hearted woman became very glad at heart on finding this easy means of crossing the river. From the next day the milk was supplied early in the morning and the milk-maid was also happy, as she saved her fare. One day the priest said to the woman, "How is it that you are no longer late now?" She said, "I cross the river by utter-

ing the name of the Lord as you told me to do, and don't stand in need of the boatman." The priest could not believe this and said, "Canst thou show me how thou crossest the river?" The woman took him with her and began to walk over the water. Looking behind, the woman saw his sad plight and said, "How is this, Sir, thou art uttering the name of the Deity with thy mouth, but at the same time with thy hands thou art trying to keep thy clothes untouched by water? Thou dost not fully rely on the Diety." Entire resignation and absolute faith in God are at the root of all miraculous deeds.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.—*Micah VII, 8.*

We cannot describe the natural history of the soul, but we know that it is divine. I cannot tell if these wonderful qualities which house to-day in this mortal frame shall ever reassemble in equal activity in a similar frame, but this one thing I know, that these qualities did not now begin to exist, cannot be sick with my sickness, nor buried in my grave. —*Emerson.*

The body is our enemy, and yet is our friend. Which of you can bear the sight of misery, and which of you cannot do so when you see it only as a painting? Because it is unreal, we do not identify ourselves with it; we know it only as a painting; it cannot bless us; it cannot hurt us. The most terrible misery painted upon a piece of canvas, we may even enjoy; we praise the technique of the artist; we wonder at his marvellous genius, even though the scene he paints is most horrible. That is the secret: that non-attachment. Be the Witness.

—*Swami Vivekananda.*

GOD AND THE GODS

Compiled by Sister Daya with an extensive excerpt from Egyptian Monotheism by Robert Hillyer, which appeared in "The Freeman," February 14th, 1923.

Polytheism, as it is understood in the Occident, is very different from the Oriental concept of it. The Western mind cannot reconcile a worship of the gods with recognition of one sole Diety. For it there is God and there is His creation; but for the more philosophic Eastern mind, nothing exists outside of Divine Consciousness. Thus the universe for the Eastern is a living universe, vibrant with Divinity, while for the Western it is at worst a chemical compound and at best a kingdom over which God reigns. The general concept in the Occident is that animals, plants, minerals,—all are created for the use of man.

"Fire is sacred," cries the Hindu, "It is the material counterpart of spiritual flame which burns up the dross in our natures. It purifies everything without itself becoming impure!" All the elements are for him living forces, worthy of reverence. They bring Deity closer to man. The Absolute Being is too removed from the human mind by reason of Its infinitude, but the manifested God,—the Divine Mother, may be worshipped and known through any one of Her countless aspects. Thus she is adored under myriad forms and names, just as She Herself enters the human heart through many avenues, but always there is but the One Supreme Mother of the Universe, supporting all, underlying all, and this even the most ignorant worshipper understands. Superstition there may be, ignorance there undoubtedly is, but also there is a basic wisdom which is never utterly over-laid.

There are in India uncompromising Monists who sweep aside all manifestation as illusion and proclaim their identity with the One. "I am He; I am He!" they declare, "I

know neither birth nor death; I am beyond heat and cold; beyond pleasure and pain! I am that unchanging One!" Sri Sankaracharya was such a reformer and there have been many others who reproclaimed to their countrymen the ultimate reach of all worship.

Ancient Egypt likewise had her God and her gods, but so strong was tradition in Egypt, supported as it was by the power of the initiated priests and kings, that there was little chance for the monistic reformer. For this reason the sublime basic truth of the One Deity was probably withheld from the masses. In the XVIII Dynasty, however, there arose a mighty reformer with the spiritual power to proclaim an unwavering monism, and the temporal power to enforce it. He overthrew the temples, the priests and the worship of the gods, and gave to the many the Knowledge which had been reserved for the few. This was Amenhotep IV, later known as Khu en Aten or Ikhnaten father to King Tut-ankh-Amen, whose tomb so lately has been opened up in the Valley of Kings.

A recent article in The Freeman, by Robert Hillyer on Egyptian Monotheism, throws so much light on the subject of polytheism in general, that we take pleasure in reprinting the following extracts from it.

"The Chapters of 'Coming Forth by Day,' commonly known as the Egyptian Book of the Dead, incorporate every detail of the old religion, from the worship of surviving tribal gods to the sublime concept which King Khu en Aten (Amenhotep IV) taught to his people. For such a conservative and devout race, the excision of any symbol or sacred name from the liturgy would have been unendurable sacrilege. About 3500 B. C., when the first chapter of 'Coming Forth by Day' was set down by the scribes, many of the symbols were already so ancient that the men who

wrote them were ignorant of their significance. Yet all were retained, for all were holy to the traditional-minded people of the Nile. Thus, the accumulated ramifications of four thousand years, embodying the cults of old local gods, gods taken over from foreign nations, and various primitive beliefs, almost obscure that inner faith which remained immutable through all the years in the hidden places of the temple.

"To understand that inner faith, one must unravel the single thread which runs in golden continuity through the shadowy mass of exterior symbolism. The Egyptian pantheon, with all its complications, is simple enough in principle. At the head stand the nine great divinities: Ra, the Sun, who signifies the One God; Shu and Tefnet, who came forth from the mouth of Ra, and who, in turn, begat the earth-god Seb and the sky-goddess Nout, whose children were Osiris, Isis, Set and Nephthys. Now obviously these separate divinities, however real they may have been to the people, held for the priests a significance which is easy to follow. The Nine, as well as the less important group of gods, were simply different aspects of the One God. Ra is the self-created life-principle from whom proceed the male and the female, or powers of reproduction (Shu and Tefnet). From the twofold law of reproduction comes forth the material Cosmos, Seb, the Earth, and Nout, the Sky, and out of them springs human divinity: Osiris, who became mortal that he might redeem mortality; Set, his brother and adversary, who brought about the Passion of Osiris; Isis, the wife of Osiris, who by her occult powers raised him from the dead and became the mother of resurrection, and Nephthys, wife of Set, who aided Isis and comforted her. Although Set slew Osiris, he is in no manner to be considered the Egyptian Satan or Evil One; he,

too, was a god and played a necessary part in an encounter which cannot be judged by the moral laws of humanity. In other words, Set the Destroyer is as worthy of worship as Osiris the Creator, since without death there can be no resurrection from matter. To these Nine Gods we must add the generation of the younger Horus and a host of other deities. It is clear that each of these gods is merely a single attribute of the One, a child of the life-principle. Furthermore, the various gods and goddesses frequently merge into one another, change names and characteristics and sybmols. Thus, Ra is the Young Man Horus when he arises in the East; when he sets in the West, he is the Old Man Tem. Nout and Hathor share the sky and exchange identities.

"The Chapters of 'Coming Forth by Day' provide verbal proof of this doctrine, which no hair-splitting can set aside, since the words are unequivocal. Beside numerous references to the One and the One God, there are many more explicit statements, from which I quote the following:

> It is Tem . . . or, as others say, it is Ra.
> I am Yesterday. I am To-day. Yesterday is Osiris and To-day is Ra.
> O One, Mighty One, of myriad forms and aspects.
> O Thou glorious Being, thou who art dowered with all sovereignty!
> O thou Eternal, thou Only One.

"The reader must not conclude from this that the Egyptian laity was convincedly monotheistic; such was not the case. But amid all the apparent confusion of the system, there was an ordered unity which the initiates knew well. The best analogy is found in the Roman Catholic Church, with its tripartite One manifested through the myriad forms of archangels, angels and saints; each an individual, yet each a part of the mystical body of Christ. The Roman Catholic laity may be prone to emphasize the mani-

festations, and to single out for particular veneration the Virgin Mother or some less conspicuous saint, with the effect, perhaps, of removing the Godhead to a more remote shrine. This partakes of the nature of a refined polytheism. Indeed, the loveliest and most profound experiences of humanity have always induced a turning aside from the straight road of the One, who is too nebulous and awful for intimate contemplation, and have lured the spiritual traveller into the chapel of some less divine but more human luminary.

"From a review of these facts, one is led to believe that the monotheistic revolt of King Khu en Aten was less a break with tradition than a revelation of secret doctrine to the vulgar gaze. This remarkable personage, with his strangely sensuous yet mystical face, was of that elect company who cannot endure the existence of darkness, and desire to let their light shine before men. Therefore, he attempted his grand reformation, and flashed the full dawn of spiritual revelation on a people whose eyes, accustomed to the shadows, were only dazzled and blinded by the glare. He put away the Many and publicly acknowledged the One, whom he worshipped under the symbol of Aten, the Sun Disk; and changed his own name from Amenhotep—Servant of Amen—to Khu en Aten—Glory of the Disk. In a country where priests of various deities form a large and powerful element in the population, such a change is not lightly suggested or easily accomplished. Although Khu en Aten put away the many gods and their priesthoods, he was worn out by the struggle. He breathed life into his religion, his own life; and as the religion waxed in spiritual strength, he waned in physical well-being, and, after a reign of about twelve years, he died. The immense hostility which he conquered only at the cost of his own

life sprang from three sources: the conservative and devout temper of his subjects, the fury of priests deprived of their benefices, and, finally, the horror of all the initiates at this frank avowal of doctrines which were the secret of the inner courts of the Temple. After his death, the old cults swept back into power under King Tut-ankh-Amen. His monuments and his name were effaced. He was darkly referred to as the criminal and the Heretic, but his criminal heresy consisted merely in this: that he attempted to teach real orthodoxy to his people. The beautiful hymns that he wrote contain no more 'heresy' than the earlier hymns to the Sun, unless we consider as heretical the omission of the pantheistic catalogue and genealogy. For the traditional hymns to the Sun contain the apostrophe 'O Thou Eternal! Thou Perfect. Thou Only One!' The religion of Khu en Aten was simply an amplification of that apostrophe.

"This king remains, then, not the originator of monotheism, but the teacher of a recognized doctrine to a people unprepared for it. If anything, the courage and beauty of his nature are shown to be even more majestic from this point of view. Had he invented the faith, he would have been little more than a fanatical innovator; as it is, he was an isolated crusader striving to give unto the meanest of his subjects the same sublime vision which was vouchsafed to a privileged minority of intelligent or ordained individuals. Time defeated him; his system collapsed and the old polytheistic beliefs were re-established. But it should not be forgotten that this polytheism was nothing more than the external aspect of a religion which acknowledged the One God, and, with that faith as its essential power, held sway over the most important part of the ancient world for more than four thousand years."

HYMN TO ATEN

By King Khu en Aten

Splendour of Aten, Thy dawning is beautiful in the horizon of heaven, O living Aten! Beginning of life!
When Thou risest in the eastern horizon of heaven, Thou fillest every land with Thy beauty;
For Thou art beautiful, great, glittering, high over the earth;
Thy rays they encompass the lands; even all Thou hast made.
Thou bindest them by Thy love.
Though Thou art afar, Thy rays are on earth;
Though Thou art on high; Thy footprints are the day.
Bright is the earth when Thou risest in the horizon, when Thou shinest as Aten by day.
The darkness is banished, when Thou sendest forth Thy rays.
The two lands (Egypt) are in daily festivity, awake and standing upon their feet for Thou hast raised them up.
Their limbs bathed, they take their clothing; their arms uplifted in adoration to Thy dawning.
Then in all the world they do their work.
All cattle rest upon their herbage,
All trees and plants flourish,
The birds flutter in their marshes, their wings uplifted in adoration to Thee.
All the sheep dance upon their feet, all winged things fly,
They live when Thou hast shone upon them.
The barques sail up-stream and down-stream alike.
Every high-way is open because Thou hast dawned.
The fish in the river leap up before Thee, and Thy rays are in the midst of the great sea.
Thou art He who createst the man-child in woman,

Who makest seed in man, who giveth life to the son in the body of his mother, who soothest him that he may not weep, a nurse even in the womb.

Who giveth breath to animate every one that He maketh,

When he cometh forth from the body on the day of his birth Thou openest his mouth in speech,
Thou suppliest his necessities.

When the chicklet crieth in the egg-shell, Thou givest him breath therein to preserve him alive,

When Thou has perfected him that he may pierce the egg,

He cometh forth from the egg to chirp with all his might;

He runneth about upon his two feet, when he hath come forth therefrom.

How manifold are all Thy works! They are hidden from before us O Thou sole God,

Whose powers no other possesseth! Thou didst create the earth according to Thy desire while Thou wast alone.

Thou makest the beauty of form through Thyself alone.

Thou art in my heart; there is no other that knoweth Thee save Thy son Ikhnaten.

Thou hast made him wise in Thy designs and in Thy might.

By Thee man liveth, and his eyes look upon Thy beauty until Thou settest.

All labour is laid aside when Thou settest in the west.

Since Thou didst establish the earth, Thou hast raised it for Thy son, Who came forth from Thy limbs,

The king living in truth, the Lord of the two lands, Neferkhepru Re-wan-Re. The son of Re, living in truth, Lord of diadems Ikhnaten, whose life is long;

(And for) the great royal wife, his beloved, Mistress of the Two Lands Nefer-Nefru Aten, Nofretete, living and flourishing forever and ever.

ANANDA ASHRAMA

Sunday, April 29th, marked the beginning of a new phase in the work of The Vedanta Centre of Boston. On the afternoon of that day, under the blue sky of California, Swami Paramananda opened his new Peace Retreat—Ananda Ashrama—with a lovely and impressive service, held out of doors among the trees and flowers in God's great temple of the hills.

So quickly has this new development come about that many are as yet not fully aware of it, nor do they know that it is but the sudden flowering of a dream that the Swami has held in his heart for years. Within the past eighteen months the growth of the Boston Centre has been phenomenal. Sunday after Sunday the Chapel has been filled to overflowing. It has been apparent to every one that some change would have to be made. It was the parting of the ways. Either it was necessary to move the Centre into larger quarters and build up a more institutionalized city work, or to relieve the pressure on the Boston work by expansion in another direction. The city proves a splendid field for spiritual work; there are countless yearning hearts in Boston for whom the Centre has been a place of refreshment and peace. The Swami prays that it may always be so. The Boston Centre will be maintained. But there are certain aspects of the spiritual life which cannot find full expression in the atmosphere of a city. In India the quiet of the forest was always sought by the spiritual teacher and his pupils. Nature draws man's thoughts inevitably to God, and is in itself the mightiest of teachers. With this in mind Swami Paramananda came across the continent about two months ago. Friends had already been searching the southern California hills for a place which would meet his requirements, but without

success. Their report to him was full of discouragement. A little over a week after his arrival, however, he was led as though by a divine Hand to one of nature's sanctuaries, in the Sierra Madre or Mother Mountains, placed high like a platform or altar five hundred feet above the valley of La Crescenta, and twenty-two hundred feet above the sea. Ten minutes after standing on the edge of this great plateau gazing through the misty gap of the Verdugo hills across the valley to where beyond lay the Pacific, he turned and said, "This is the place I have been seeking!" In every way it seemed a gift of God, set aside and held inviolate for this purpose.

The first public Service was held four days after the Swami's second return from Boston. Nothing could have been simpler. People were notified by post card and through local papers. Hurried arrangements were made to meet those who came by trolley or bus and to motor them up the mile and a half of road which rises by a steep grade to the Ashrama. Benches were made and folding chairs borrowed for the purpose of seating those who might come. The platform upon which the Swami stood was of grass. Locust trees in full blossom, masses of yellow broom, white syringa, wild sage, and the lupin made the air fragrant around him. Those who have been to the Centre in Boston are familiar with the great round symbol of the Word which hangs above the altar. Over the Swami's head on this Sunday afternoon, hung the symbol of the Word, Its truest symbol, the flaming sun. Behind him, as in a Greek amphitheatre, rose the hills, level after level, softly veiled and shadowed, forming an almost perfect triangle between two arms of which lay the natural platform upon which stands the house.

From three o'clock on, the motors began to climb up

from the valley and it was after four when they ceased coming and the Swami felt that he could begin. While waiting, the people formed into groups and wandered through the shaded paths or sat under the trees. There was no tedium in the delay for all nature was alive and glistening. When all were assembled every seat was taken. Old friends were there, but there were many who came in touch with the work for the first time. Some were drawn by curiosity, some by association and some by deep spiritual hunger. Beautiful and profound as the Swami's words have seemed to his listeners in Boston and in other places, even more simple and beautiful did they there on the natural altar of Ananda Ashrama. Little lizards ran up the limbs of the tree above the Swami's head and shyly made their way over the grass at his feet, birds hopped trustingly near and humming birds flashed through the air. The Swami spoke as always of that great unity which underlies all diversity, of that One Infinite which man can no more partition off than he can partition off the infinite sky. His Sanskrit prayers had a new majesty, heard out of doors with the undertone of nature, and his peace chant mingled with the peace of the hills and seemed to flow forth over the world below. All felt the speel of it and lingered till the long shadows told the lateness of the hour and the three crescent-shaped ranges turned amethyst with the evening haze. The lights of the cities, Glendale, Los Angeles and even San Pedro were already twinkling, when the last guest had gone. It could not have been a lovlier or more propitious beginning.

Much has already been done with the property by Mr. Fusenot, a French gentleman with artistic taste, who planned and developed it; but much remains to be done. A charming red-tiled house gives accommodation to the

workers already there, but when others come, there will have to be further construction. Then, of course, there is to be a Temple and this, the Swami hopes, all the workers will aid in building, so that it may be a real temple raised by loving hands to the glory of God, as were so many of the great temples and cathedrals of old. Mountain springs provide deliciously pure water, but much of this goes to waste, causing a shortage in the time of irrigation. One of the first activities will be the enlarging of two dams in the canyon above the plateau. This not only will conserve the water but will form two lovely miniature lakes around the edges of which will grow the Indian lotus. As one friend said, who came to the Ashrama, "You have a lifetime of work before you, spiritual and material." But in all the development that will take place, the charming wildness of the place will be maintained in order that it may ever have the nature of a true Ashrama or Retreat. Placed as it is in the National Forest Reserve, it will be safe from the intrusion of the city. It is rare indeed to find a spot which combines so perfectly the quality of remoteness and accessibility, for Ananda Ashrama is only sixteen miles from Los Angeles and the journey can easily be made by automobile in forty-five minutes. It is only eight miles from Pasadena, six miles from Glendale and four miles from the Flint Ridge Country Club. Those who come to the Sunday afternoon Service by street car are met by the Ashrama automobiles between three and four o'clock at the end of the Glendale-Montrose car line.

The Swami will divide his time between California, Boston and other cities, but even during his absence there will be Sunday afternoon Services. It is hoped that the Ashrama will soon become a place of pilgrimage, the goal for many a yearning soul from all over the world.

REPORT

On the evening of April 2nd, Swami Paramananda held a reception at The Vedanta Centre of Boston, for the purpose of announcing to friends and students the recent purchase of land at La Crescenta, California, to be used as an Ashrama or Peace Retreat. He made it clear that this is to be but an extension of the Boston work,—a home where the workers can express certain ideas and ideals under more favorable climatic conditions than in New England. "You cannot imagine out door life in zero weather," said the Swami. "We shall create out there a place where a community of workers can live and express their talents along different lines,—music, art, industry. It will not be limited to religion, although that will be the soul of it. Silent living. People who dare live and wait patiently, whether the world gives any recognition to them or not. This home is going to be created for that purpose. It is not a sudden change. For some time I have felt the need of a different line of action. Life is to be put on a simplier basis. It does not mean giving up any thing; it means only expansion. We are going into something bigger."

The Swami called upon Mr. Charles Larkin who had accompanied him from California to give a description of the new property and of the finding of it. Mr. Larkin by means of maps which he had himself made, showed how La Crescenta lay in relation to Los Angeles and Pasadena. The spirit of Ananda Ashrama he said, was expressed in Dr. Van Dyke's "God of the Open Air."

"Thou who hast made thy dwelling fair
With flowers below, above with starry lights
And set thine altars everywhere,—
On mountain heights,

In woodlands dim with many a dream,
In valleys bright with springs,
And on the curving capes of every stream:
Thou who hast taken to thyself the wings
Of morning, to abide
Upon the secret places of the sea,
And on far islands, where the tide
Visits the beauty of untrodden shores,
Waiting for worshippers to come to thee
In thy great out-of-doors!
To thee I turn, to thee I make my prayer,
God of the open air."

Deep interest was shown by all in the Swami's announcement and a surprising number declared their readiness to follow him west and take up a new life in California. A description of the Ashrama is given in this number.

* * * *

During Swami Paramananda's absence from Boston the regular Services at The Chapel of the Vedanta Centre were ably conducted by one of his assistants, Miss Katharine F. Sherwood, who has been closely associated with the work ever since the establishment of the work in Boston in 1909. All the Services were well attended and Miss Sherwood's earnest and clear presentation was found peculiarly helpful by everyone. Her talks on "Reconstruction," "Religion and Modern Life," "Christianity," "Practical Vedanta" and "Personality" were especially appreciated, and we hope to publish some of these from time to time in the coming issues of the Message. The Swami expects to remain in Boston through the entire month of June and possibly the first two Sundays of July.

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Message of the East

JUNE, 1923

SILENCE AND CO-ORDINATION

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Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
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THE VEIL OF UNKNOWING

By Swami Paramananda

IT is not death that robs our life,
Nor is it the dark of night that bars
our inward sight;
Nay, it is the Veil of Unknowing.
Behold how the sky of our fair heart is
darkened by the rising mist of
jealousy and anger, suspicion
and doubt.
These powers of blackness by their
quick alliance, form this Veil
of Unknowing.
Shall we not keep the sky of our heart
clear and fair like the polished
mirror, to reflect the truer
image of our inmost soul?
One speck of this doubting dust lodged on
our heart, draws another and yet
another
Till no longer our vision is true.
We pray unto thee, Thou Destroyer of darkness.
Help us to keep our heart pure, clear and
free from this Veil of Unknowing.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Loud speech, profusion of words, and possessing the skillfulness in expounding Scriptures are merely for the enjoyment of the learned. They do not lead to liberation.

—Sankaracharaya.

Silence is a healing for all ailments. Silence is good for the wise; how much more so for the foolish. All my days I have grown up amongst the wise, and I have found naught of better service than silence.

—Ancient Jewish Proverb.

The repose of the sage is not what the world calls repose. His repose is the result of his mental attitude. All creation could not disturb his equilibrium; hence his repose. When water is still, it is like a mirror, reflecting the beard and the eyebrows. It gives the accuracy of the water-level, and the philosopher makes it his model. And if water thus derives lucidity from stillness, how much more the faculties of the mind! The mind of the sage, being in repose, becomes the mirror of the universe, the speculum of all creation. *—Chaung Tzu.*

Keep thine own sentiments and faith to thyself. Do not talk about them abroad, otherwise thou wilt be a great loser.

Keep thyself aloof at the time of thy devotions from those who scoff at them and those who ridicule piety and the pious.*—Sri Ramakrishna.*

When thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore

like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him.—*Jesus the Christ.*

Silence is the heart of all things; sound the fluttering of its pulse,

Which the fever and the spasm of the universe convulse.

Every sound that breaks the silence only makes it more profound,

Like a crash of deafening thunder in the sweet, blue stillness drowned;

Let thy soul walk softly in thee, as a saint in heaven unshod,

For to be alone with silence, is to be alone with God."

—*Beyond the Sunrise.*

With understanding held by firmness, and mind established in the Self, let him thus by degrees attain tranquillity; let him not think of anything else. Wheresoever the restless and unsteady mind may wander away, let him withdraw it from there and bring it under the control of the Self alone. He whose passions are quieted and mind perfectly tranquil, who has become one with Brahman, being freed from all impurities, to such a Yogi comes supreme bliss.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

What if the wicked nature, which is as a sea casting out mire and dirt, rage against thee? There is a river, a sweet, still, flowing river, the streams whereof will make glad thy heart. And learn but in quietness and stillness to retire to the Lord, and wait upon Him; in Whom thou shalt feel peace and joy, in the midst of thy troubles from the cruel and vexatious spirit of this world.

—*Isaac Penington.*

SILENCE AND CO-ORDINATION

By Swami Paramananda

A seed in the womb of mother earth lies in silence absorbing nourishment and other natural blessings until its expanded soul bursts forth into blossom. The spirit of genius, nurtured in the bosom of quiet contemplation, awaits patiently its appointed hour of awakening. Silence, the great unseen power, the miracle of life, works upon our character with strange contrast, at times overwhelming us with its oppressive stillness, and again it falls upon our heart as a shower of refreshing rain-drops on a sultry summer day. How often silence acts as a tonic, invigorating and reviving our dull spirit. Then again its effect upon us is like that of a narcotic, putting our life's energies into a state of morbid sleep. All great forces of nature work in contrast.

In the world of religion and philosophy the practice of silence plays a most vital part. It creates an atmosphere and enables the seeker to find access to an inner sanctuary entirely hidden from the restless and turbulent material world. Whenever we are listening to fine music if someone speaks or makes a noise we are distracted, and jarred by it, and often we lose the subtle beauty of the music. Similarly in spiritual study if our attention is diverted we receive little or no benefit. That is the reason why the idea of complete silence before a spiritual study is strongly advocated by many of the great schools of thought. We can easily see its technical reason, how it aids us in the act of concentration, but its more profound significance is the unfoldment of our higher nature. Even to-day, we find many of the places of worship maintain rigid silence to create an atmosphere so needful for spiritual devotion and prayer. We can never hear the language of

the soul if our ears are filled with the loud noises of the world. One of the Sufi mystics expresses the import of this beautifully. "Be silent that the Lord Who gave thee language may speak, for as He fashioned a door and lock, He has also made a key. . . . I am silent. Speak Thou, O Soul of Soul of Soul."

All the mystic teachers and illumined sages emanate a peculiar atmosphere of calm and quiet dignity. In India some of the great seers completely refrain from speech and yet they exert a most potent influence upon the lives of their followers. One of the first forms of spiritual discipline the neophytes have to undergo is the practice of silence. They never speak before their teachers unless they are asked to do so. What is the most direct blessing they receive through it? It makes their mind receptive and whatever it receives it can easily assimilate. The necessity of this is felt even in our secular education. Unless the mind is receptive any amount of time expended in study is of very little avail. It is interesting to note how Madame Montessori in her system of education advocates this idea of silence. In India its value was felt from time immemorial and was widely practised from child-education to the advanced study of Vedic revelation. This mode of living and thinking, however, is quite out of fashion with our modern life and habit. There are some who even feel a strong aversion to it and this is because they confuse the idea of silence with dullness and inaction.

The aim of silence is not to free our mind from thought and assume a state of emptiness and passivity. On the contrary silence becomes a definite factor for our efficient and concentrated thought. Silence means co-ordination of our body, our mind, and all our faculties to such an extent that every particle moves in one rhythm. In this state all

our aspirations and ideals work in harmony, so much so that there is no friction. You can verify this in connection with machinery; that which avoids friction most makes the least noise and endures the longest. In the world of life and all forms of activity, we find this to be true. The life that moves without inharmony and friction is the most efficient life. A man whose mind is well-ordered and whose whole system is well-organized is always finding something of interest within himself. He does not offer his opinion to others because he has found something within. He has become quiet, and through his balance of mind and attitude he is always discovering an inner interest. That is what the Indo-Aryans recognized as the most essential factor in all forms of study. No one can study successfully unless he has the power of concentration and co-ordination, and this power cannot be achieved unless we come to an attitude of silence. A silent being is a very restful being. Even in a household we find a person who is calm and composed and thoughtful radiates a powerful influence. Nervously disorganized people find a great source of rest through him.

One of the most interesting phenomena that takes place in connection with the practice of silence is that the mind evolves creative genius. For instance when a person who is used to intense activity and outer diversion for his pastime and pleasure is suddenly thrown on his inner resources, if he is not thwarted by it, his mind will have a peculiar reaction and he will discover his own inner reserve and originality. This also is true in connection with children's education. If we do not try to keep their minds altogether occupied with artificial toys and noisy games, they will work and invent newer ones, and this quickening of the inner faculties is the gist of true education. We

think better when our mind is not weighted down by matter. We see more clearly when our eyes are focussed on a single objective and nothing is more efficacious towards this end than the practice of silence.

All wise people realize that the deeper part of our nature can only be expressed effectively when our outer being is still. That is why so often they retire from the crowd. They are not keen to offer their opinions. They think deeply and act quietly. We often misunderstand this type of people who are not constantly active like ourselves. We imagine that their lives are wasteful because they are not constantly engaged in outer occupation, but we can never measure the good that radiates from a calm and contemplative spirit. It is not in India alone that they have this view that a person does not have to talk in order to impart his teaching, but it is shared by many of the mystics and seers of the world. In one of the great Indian classics an illustration is given of a pupil approaching a teacher with his mind filled with doubt and ignorance. Although he asked many questions the teacher remained silent, but the disciple's doubts cleared away even as he sat in his presence. A parallel instance is given by Plato. "I will tell you, Socrates," says Aristides, "a thing incredible but nevertheless true, I made a great proficiency when I associated with you, even if I was only in the same house, though not in the same room; but more so when I was in the same room; and much more when I looked at you. But I made by far the greatest proficiency when I sat near you and touched you."

We have to have certain fundamental virtues before we can make any headway with our spiritual life. If our mind is filled with noble thoughts we do not find ourselves lonely and unprotected at any time. The average

person is lonely whenever there is no one to entertain him or talk with him, but a person who has entered into his spiritual depth, even in a small measure, is very glad to find an opportunity when he can be alone, communing with his inner Self. We should all learn to be alone with ourselves. People imagine that they cannot be happy unless they are constantly in the company of others. Then again some think that they must get away from everything and everybody in order to have their peace of mind. However, we are never alone even though we may enter a mountain cave if we are tormented by our own ignorance and selfishness. You may wonder what I mean by silence if it is not getting away from the crowd, if it is not breaking away from the noisy part of life. It does not mean that. It requires something more than running away from people. You may enter the forest's untravelled depths and yet you may not find any quiet if your own mind is noisy, if your own attitude is distracted, or if you have not the harmony within your own self. These are the things which we have to cultivate and it is better for us to cultivate them before we fall into the entanglement of life.

We cannot go into this world and expect to find everything just the way we should like it. There are disappointments and unexpected happenings, but in spite of all these upheavals we can carry ourselves safely and with poise if we have acquired the silent attitude of mind and habit. You may believe intellectually that it is a wrong thing to be angry, it is a wrong thing to be impatient, it is a wrong thing to speak harshly; but the words come unexpectedly, and before you realize it you have spoken unkindly. We can order our mind in such rhythm and connect our life with

higher forces that these calamities will never befall us.

The great secret of success is that we work with our whole being, and we cannot do this without being absolutely still and concentrated. These are the simple facts of life, but not so easy to accomplish. We cannot expect somebody else to do it for us. There are many people who would like to have others think for them. Even the greatest mind cannot think for another. We are never going to gain our heart's satisfaction, or our highest wisdom, in that way. Another mind and another brain cannot think out our problem, because it does not know the entire situation. We cannot give a true picture to any one no matter how much we may try. There is, however, a way of finding our own solution, and that is when we learn to enter within our own depth.

It is not so much work that wears us out. Sometimes lack of work may do it. It is not knowing how to direct ourselves; it is not knowing how to find that attitude of collectiveness and poise. When we are equipped with these qualities we always have greater power of penetration. Intellectually we may grasp the value of these things, but that is only the ethical aspect of it. It is the most dynamic, most practical and most valuable thing when we have applied it in our life, and that is where we find the fruition. A person who is nervous ceases to be nervous; a person who is physically weak and disorganized, gradually becomes calm, and a person who is dull, without any power of magnetism or attraction, suddenly blossoms and has a certain amount of light. Now this comes from within, and for that reason it has a far-reaching effect. There are many people who can talk and preach and make a noise, but nothing superficial can bring us satisfaction. It is by living quietly and earnestly that we evolve the true

spiritual insight which enables us to find our intrinsic value from an inner depth.

Great ideas and ideals are always before us. Everybody hears them, but when a genuine soul hears an idea he takes it; he says, I must know more about it. He thinks, reflects and meditates. He goes into his very inmost depth, and then he brings it to fruition. However, it does not come to a man who is in haste and wants it all at once. That is one of our greatest calamities. The things we acquire by long, steadfast, devoted effort are the things which last and bring into our life great richness. Therefore we must abandon as soon as we can this idea of haste and wanting results at once. The deep things do not come suddenly. Let us be patient,—patient with ourselves. We may recognize many defects in our nature. No matter how much blemish we may have within ourselves, or how much disorder, it can all be removed. Go on working silently. If you do not succeed at once, put more energy and force into it. One who is willing to wait, the very attitude saves him and enables him to surmount the insurmountable difficulties, and one who is impatient, he loses his opportunities. Therefore silence and patience go together. It has a wonderful creative power. Make a study of the lives of the great men. They conceive an idea; they do not go out and shout it before the world, but they think silently and work quietly until they realize their ideal.

If we can form the habit of devoting a certain time for silent relaxation, it will have a very definite beneficial effect upon both our physical and moral being. When in course of our daily round of duties we find ourselves growing physically tired or mentally tense, if we can take an attitude of relaxation and co-ordinate our thoughts,

discarding all feelings of vexation and unrest, we will feel restored and refreshed. It will even enable us to do our work better. How often people go to bed after their day's labor and they do not rest. The next morning they wake up feeling very weary, without any freshness or sense of rest. What is the cause of it? They were not working at night. No, but they were worrying about their work. They took their work, all their worries and anxieties to bed with them. That is not the way to order our life. There is time for work, there is time for recreation and rest, and silence is the best rest giver. There is nothing which can rest us more quickly than the attitude of silence, and every one has the right to it. When everything is still, when our thoughts are quieted down and our entire nervous system is in order, when we have naught against any one and our mind is calm and poised, then in the inner depth of stillness we find something which is so ennobling and restful that others even feel it.

"How sweet is the sound of silence! How tender is its touch! How fragrant is its breathing! How lovely is its form! O be still yet awhile that my soul may see and feel, hear and touch its own in this realm of peace divine." There are delicate things in our life, most potent and most vibrant, but we miss them because we lack in delicacy of feeling. When we are distracted by the visible material glamour of life we miss our mark, but in that hour of silent co-ordination, when all our faculties are in perfect tune, we realize that we are part of the cosmic Life. It is in this hour we find the fullness of our life, for then our little life has become united with the great Life, and our little mind with the cosmic Mind. Only at such moments when the finite and Infinite are so commingled does our mind stand apart with speechless silence and unspoken wonder.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF SILENCE

(Experience in the use of prayer without words by small groups including both Quakers and Anglicans.)

First began the stilling of mind and soul. The very activity of the brain may make a man a bad listener, and listening was our goal. The intellect needs to learn how to be still, no less than the body, if it is to concentrate all its powers. This bringing of the mind away from its distractions and restlessness to a single and sustained attention to God is the crux of the whole matter.

The recollection of God under some aspect of His boundless immensity—His greatness, His awful sanctity, His enfolding Being, His Presence in the soul of man;—these are the kind of cosmic thoughts, in themselves casting upon the mind the hush and still wonder which is the avenue to contemplation.

"God's greatness lies around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness His Rest."

Here too, it is useful to have in mind some quick word of recall, by which the wandering of thought can be instantly, and as often as needed brought back to the central purpose—the word "God", not spoken, but sounding in the mind. This preparation may take long. It is worth persisting in until it has gained its end, until mind and soul are silent unto God.

Thus we pass to the centre of our silence. The will is at its highest activity. As an insect poised in the air, seemingly motionless, with wings in such rapid motion that they are invisible, is all the while sustained by its resistance to the air, so the will in this listening is not passive. It holds fast to its rest in God by sustained resistance to all that would drag it down or invade its silence. This is very far from making the mind a blank.

It is the filling of the mind with God to the exclusion of all else. Not in words, nor visions, nor signs, did we look for the communications of God. Thoughts rising spontaneously, movements and stirrings welling up from the depths of the soul, the inner glory of God hidden in the soul of man, emerging, filling the Temple, none of these word images conveys what can be conveyed. Only we knew God, and we knew that we knew Him.

THE LOST SON

Parable by Buddha

A certain householder's son went away into a far country, and while the father was accumulating immense wealth the son became wretchedly poor. Seeking for food and shelter, the son chanced to come to his father's door, not knowing who dwelt within. But the father beheld him and ordered his servants to call him. The son, however, observing the magnificence of the palace, thought: "Perhaps this rich man suspects me to be a thief and will throw me into prison." So he fled without seeing the master of the house.

Then the father dispatched messengers to overtake his son and bring him back, despite his loud lamentations. But the servants were admonished to deal tenderly with the young man and to give him employment as a helper on the estate. The youth was well satisfied with his position and labored diligently. This so pleased the father that he promoted him to higher and higher duties.

After many years had passed, he summoned his son, called together all his servants, and made known the secret to them. The son, overjoyed to find his father, took his rightful place in the household, and became a dutiful son.

Thus it is that only when the mind is made ready for higher truths, can it receive and understand their value.

INFLUENCE OF MIND UPON MIND

By W. F. Evans

(Excerpt from Esoteric Christianity)

All true education is a spiritual development. Spiritual knowledge is imparted, not by verbal discourse merely, but by the silent influence of mind upon mind. It is a principle that has always been recognized in the world, that one mind, by the influence of its silent sphere, can lift another mind to a higher intellectual level. This has always been a method of instruction practised by the Hindu adepts in teaching the neophyte the principles of their occult philosophy. The *chela*, or scholar, is subjected to the psychological influence of the *guru*, or teacher, who aims to impart to him knowledge through the Universal Mind. The disciple waits upon the master in a spirit of emptiness, and the intellectual sphere of the teacher's mind fills the vacuum. This is a method of education and of acquiring spiritual knowledge entirely unrecognized in our Western systems of instruction, but has long been known in the Orient, and was practised by Jesus, and belongs to Christianity.

The spirit of man searches out all things; yea, the deep things of God. It is the spring of all inspiration and revelation. As our individual spirit has a voice, so has the Universal Spirit, in whom we are included. Let us turn the inward ear towards the "speaking silence" to receive the soundless word, "the deep and calm revealing." If with a sincere desire to know the truth, and live the truth, and use it for the good of mankind, and not from a mere idle curiosity or for the sake of gain, we are found listening at the door of the temple of wisdom and the "halls of learning," the door will be unlocked and thrown open to us,

and we may enter in and read the records of the hidden wisdom, which God appointed before the ages for our glorification. It is only in the deep silence of the soul that God speaks. Silence is the bosom of the Infinite Life, and contains the indelible record of all the truth that ever entered the mind of man.

MAN THE IMAGE-MAKER

By Sister Daya

Is it true, as we are so often told, that we all have the equipment for achievement if we will but use it? When a master-spirit assures us with dynamic force that he possesses no special endowment or faculty that we do not possess; but that he has merely learned how to employ and direct forces and faculties common to all mankind, way deep in our heart we are inclined to be skeptical. How well we feel we know ourselves,—our limited mental powers, our fluctuating purpose, our confined outlook upon life. We say we have not the genius and are content to place the burden of our failure upon what we assume to be an inherent lack.

But we are using or misusing every passing minute a faculty that lies at the very root of genius. Let no one say he lacks equipment who possesses the image-making faculty, and every one does possess it for without it man could not be a rational being. In the depths of our consciousness lies our workshop where we are ceaselessly engaged in building mental moulds into which our character and our life will be poured. With this in mind, let us look within and understand why our character is ill-proportioned and full of distortions, why our life seems to be so chaotic and purposeless. Are our mental pictures balanced, sustained, clear and vivid? Or are they vague

and changing like a never-ending freak "movie" throwing confused shadows on the screen of our mind?

No man in any age has ever brought anything into being that has not first been but a mental image. This applies both to the inner and to the outer life. In order to make this more vivid let us contemplate the man-made world around us. From its most gigantic structure to its finest and most intricate invention, from the painting on the walls of a palace to the design on a birthday cake there is nothing man has made that was not first a thing of the imagination. We can infer from this fact alone, the supremacy of Spirit over matter. Strange indeed if the mind that has given birth to the civilizations of the earth was itself only a material reflex.

This is the process: First a mental image is formed, then according to the persistency, the intensity and the clearness with which we can hold it, it is precipitated, as it were, into matter. There is nothing that cannot be achieved through this power of imagination. The secret of its use comprises the mystery of every system of spiritual or of occult development. It is the key to heaven and likewise to hell. No one ever yet yielded to outer temptation who did not first yield to his own mental picture of it. No one ever grew into sainthood who had not long contemplated in imagination the beauty and blessedness of selflessness and renunciation. Into the holy image he builds himself slowly and imperceptibly. That is why such a point has always been made in India of living with the Holy. One cannot be in the company of great souls without being mentally possessed by their greatness. They become a dominant picture in the mind that draws us up to its own likeness. When that image would fade, the living presence of the original revivifies and strengthens it. A

mental habit becomes established which after a time acts as a man's guardian angel, reasserting itself at critical moments.

Most of us now have the habit of chaotic thought; our imagination seldom reaches the dignity of a creative force but confines itself to idle day-dreaming which is neither distinct nor sustained enough to produce anything but its own shifting likeness. Watch the faces of passers-by on the city street and read the record of the imagination. How many are vital, striking, purposeful, illumined? How many are lighted by noble thoughts or selfless striving? What record is written on your face to the observer? What thoughts are you carrying with you as you pass along the street? Are you building petty images around your own petty self and its interests? Are you busy exalting your ego in some little play of the imagination? If you are, then strive to stop doing so. It may not be easy. There may be an enormous inertia to overcome, perhaps mental habits of life-times. It may take life-times to build new habits to take the place of the old, but that should be no discouragement. The joy is in the doing. It can be the most wonderful game in the world, this game of self-reconstruction. There need be no struggle against the old habit; all that you need do is to begin to turn your mind towards that which represents the highest Ideal in your life. Learn to love it more and more, reach ever higher and higher; it will supplant the old tendencies. They will fall away like dry leaves. A great teacher from India once said, "Renunciation comes from fullness." When our heart and mind are full of the beautiful constructive images there will be no room left for the old.

Why not begin this divine task to-day? It will have to be done some day. To the one who has entered the richer

world of pure imagination, the average mental picture gallery seems unbearably dull and lifeless. Such a one wonders how people can go on year after year living in such a dead world. As your Ideal grows, as your imagination reaches out beyond the selfish interests, life grows into a radiant delightful experience, thrilling, absorbing, blissful. Begin now! Never mind how weak your imagination, how feeble the Ideal. Yearn for something greater and the little paltry image-making faculty will gradually build you pictures that will exalt your soul and make you into a noble human being.

The average mind is merely futile but there is also the illegitimate use of the imagination,—the building of mental pictures destructive to oneself and others,—the seeds of crime and disaster. Then there are the lesser perversions, imaginary worries, sickness and woe, built up in the mind and dwelt upon till an atmosphere is formed that is a veritable culture-bed for trouble.

You may ask, is not imagination often but a vision of the unreal? A sort of "fool's gold"? Do not people experience many things inwardly that have no foundation in fact? What is fact and what is fancy? Is it really possible for us to conceive of anything that is outside of existence? We may make strange distortions, combine and recombine, but does not nature the same? It is a matter of very real fact that imagination,—pure, legitimate imagination,—may be the open door through which we reach something greater than fact,—reality. So long as we dwell in the realm of self our imagination will often deceive us, lead us by false trails; but when we give it wings to soar outside of self into the divine realm, it will bring back to us immortal pictures which will be the matrix for our spiritual being. This is pure imagination.

As we stand on the threshold of the inner life, devoid as yet of realization, we could not advance but for the images we make of our Ideal. We must have something tangible into which we can build ourselves. Our body, our mind, our character will by a divine law, follow our imagination. Well did the great Hindu teachers of old know the value of the image as a focussing point for the Ideal. Some of the mightiest of their seers gained illumination through the reality with which they were able to imbue a symbol. The very atoms of our body fall into place along our mental lines of cleavage if we have the one-pointedness needful to hold the picture. Outer symbols aid enormously in this one-pointed concentration. Herein lies the reason for idols and idol-worship. So-called idol-worship springs from a spiritual science which like many sciences can produce life or death.

Most of us could not approach the formless Spirit without the aid of form. We must make Spirit real, tangible, living; or we shall never realize it. Sri Krishna in the Gita very definitely states that the formless path is almost impossible for the embodied to attain. Picture your divine Ideal; place your heart upon it; make it your darling, your companion, your mother, your father,—anything you please to make it; but make it real. It will be real. It is real, more real than you can as yet possibly conceive and it will fill with its reality any form you are capable of building, will lead you by that form to itself.

As you draw your Ideal close, you will love it and as you love it you will lose yourself in it and when you lose yourself God rushes in. Meditate upon God as an infinite divine Essence forever out of reach and you will keep on meditating till the end of time with little or no result. Meditate upon God as a living presence in the heart in

Whom you confide, Whom you can serve, at Whose feet you can consecrate yourself, and never again will you think of yourself as an isolated fragment of consciousness, such bliss will fill you, such a sense of completion and peace. All barriers will fall away; all littleness will be forgotten; only will there exist that eternal Being filling and expanding the heart with Itself.

We wait and wait for some formula, some magic word, some initiation to do for us what we must do for ourselves. There is a magic word,—earnestness. The Buddha tells us that earnestness is the path of life and heedlessness is the path of death. Be earnest and nothing will resist you, but be earnest for great ends. Why should we speak of the lesser uses of the imagination. The man of vital imagination will be the creator and producer in any line that he undertakes; but these words are being written for those who having once seen the vision of the Highest can never again direct their God-given faculties to anything less than Its realization.

Man's destiny lies within the scope of his imagination from the little ego-filled dreams of childhood to the mature vision of the Infinite. Linked to the imagination is the will. Some modern psychologists exalt the imagination over the will. But we must discriminate, we must decide what the mind shall dwell upon, what type of picture it shall form and this involves an act of will. In its turn, the picture will lure the will on to more sustained endeavor. When we begin to analyze human psychology we enter a confused realm and are removed a thousand miles from the utter simplicity of Divine realization. Let us rather, like children with a wonderful picture book, be content to rest in the arms of the eternal Divine Mother, trusting Her to turn the pages and tell us the story.

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL MAN

By Emanuel Swedenborg.

It is not contrary to rationality and liberty to compel oneself. It has been shown already that man has an internal and an external of thought, and that these are distinct as prior and posterior, or as higher and lower; and that because they are so distinct, they can act separately and can act conjointly. They act separately when a man from the external of his thought says and does in one way while he interiorly thinks and wills in another; and they act conjointly when a man says and does as he interiorly thinks and wills; this is common with the sincere, the other with the insincere. Now since the mind's internal and external are thus distinct, the internal may even fight with the external, and by combat force it to consent. Combat exists when man thinks that evils are sins and therefore wishes to desist from them; for when he desists, the door is opened; and when it is opened, the lusts of evil that occupied the internal of thought are cast out by the Lord and affections of good are implanted in place of them. This is done in the internal of thought. But as the enjoyments of the lusts of evil which occupy the external of thought cannot be cast out at the same time, therefore combat exists between the internal and the external of thought. The internal wishes to cast out those enjoyments because they are enjoyments of evil and not in concord with the affections of good in which the internal now is; and, in place of the enjoyments of evil, it wishes to introduce enjoyments of good which are in concord; the enjoyments of good are what are called the goods of charity. From this contrariety arises combat, which if it becomes severe is called temptation. Now as a man is man from the internal of his thought, for this is

man's very spirit, it is evident that a man compels himself when he compels the external of his thought to consent, or to receive the enjoyments of his affections, which are goods of charity.

When, therefore, the internal conquers, as it does when the internal has reduced the external to consent and compliance, then the Lord gives man liberty itself and rationality itself; for then man is withdrawn by the Lord from infernal freedom, which in itself is slavery, and is brought into heavenly freedom, which in itself is real freedom, and there is given him fellowship with the angels.

AN EAST INDIAN POET

(Book Review—by Anna Blanche McGill, Louisville Evening Post.)

Rabindranath Tagore is doubtless more widely known than his fellow-countryman. His books reveal more nuance of perception and thought, perhaps more power. But in this book by Paramananda we find a certain freshness of poetic charm, a sincerity and spontaneity of expression, more pleasing than the more elaborated effusions of the older poet. Here we catch fewer echoes of The Song of Solomon and other familiar writings; we are aware of a poet and mystic making a forthright personal record of aspiration and emotion.

The volume is divided into groups of communings, Songs of Nature, and a Hymn of Adoration. Though patently Oriental in tropes and atmosphere, the lines speak the universal language of the mystical and poetical who, in spite of the insistent claims of old mortality, are addicted to spreading wings of aspiration toward a "diviner ether, a purer air," toward the Spirit of Perfection that inspires "the might of the mighty, sanctity of the saint, melody of the musician."

In the poet's constant awareness of a spiritual Presence, there is an occasional suggestion of Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven" and the Psalm, "Though I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea." The East Indian's phrases run: "Seeking for my soul's freedom, I have wandered far. . . . In vain have I sought my liberation apart from Thee. . . . Henceforth I am Thy Captive."

Ardor and simplicity are among the notes that charm throughout the volume. These characteristic words have a familiar ring to Western readers: "Tell me, O, Thou wondrous Being, why dost Thou choose the lowly hearts? Is it to make them bright with thy footprints?" Agreeably different, on the whole, from the vague yearnings, the steep transcendent climbs up which some of the Easterners lead is the author's concrete and condensed phrasing.

The vitality of perception and response to beauty in the Nature poems may surprise those who consider the Hindus merely passive and renunciatory. Particularly pleasing the lines to the "Spirit of Rose: teach me more of thy subtle and wondrous ways of love; I am thy ignorant brother, stranger to this new world of thine."

The poet writes flexible and fluent English. His form is rhythmic verse, sometimes flowing into rhythmic prose, but nearly always with a poetic content.

REPORT

Whether we know it or not, our blessings are increased whenever we share them with others. The Boston Centre is finding this true in the extension of the work to the Pacific Coast. Never before has there been such a spontaneous blossoming of responsiveness and appreciation. This was especially marked in the glow of joyous welcome that awaited Swami Paramananda's home coming a few

weeks ago. All through his absence there was a united and sustained interest at all the public Services. On the first Sunday after his return this culminated into an attendance that crowded the Chapel and the adjoining hall to full capacity. There was a silent welcome of keen anticipation and radiance as the Swami opened the Service and gave his powerful and inspiring message. The subject of his address was most fittingly, "The Higher Consciousness." At the close of the hour he was received with many warm expressions of joy and eager questions as to the latest developments of the work in California. A great number are contemplating visits to the new Ashrama for spiritual recreation and inspiration and so prove conclusively that "Ananda Ashrama" is filling a need already felt by many.

* * * *

As various addresses of the Swami are published in "The Message of the East" from month to month, it gives us a sense of sharing with our readers the Sunday Services held in the tranquil and inspiring atmosphere of the Chapel. We wish that in a similiar way we might share with all the fragrant beauty of the floral offerings. Through the devotion of many this has grown into a vital feature of the day's Service. Wild and cultivated flowers come from friends not only in Boston, but many outlying towns. New Hampshire contributes generously, nor are Cincinnati and Rochester too distant to have a share, and California has sent her orange blossoms more than once to mingle their fragrance with the incense of the Sanctuary. Gradually and spontaneously a moment's silent pause at the door of the Sanctuary has become to many an indispensable part of the worship. In their effortless fragrance and beauty these altar flowers become concrete symbols and expressions of many unspoken prayers.—*G. P.*

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Message of the East

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AUGUST OR SEP

JULY, 1923

PRACTICAL RELIGION
AND COMPARATIVE STUDY

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.
Published monthly except in August and September

Vol. XII JULY, 1923 No. 7

MY LIFE'S FULFILLMENT

By Swami Paramananda

MY life's broken harmony is restored,
The unfinished song is now complete
Since I have found my place at Thy
sacred Feet.

Thy beckoning hath saved me from
falling into the snare of deception.
Contact with Thy holy being hath
refilled my ebbing life;

Verily Thou art my life's fulfillment.
The cause of my joy and sorrow, laughter
and grief;
My soul's sunshine and heart's
rain-cloud.

I have nothing apart from Thee;
I am nothing apart from Thee;
I want nothing other than Thee.
Wilt Thou not stay with me who am so
dependent on Thee?
Wilt Thou not take me who have no
other than Thee?

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? —*Malachi.*

In whatever manner men worship Me in the same manner do I fulfill their prayers. My path men follow in every way. —*Bhagavad-Gita.*

We are all children of Heaven, and therefore should love one another, as Heaven loves us all.

—*Kaibara Ekken.*

Next to faith in God, the chief duty of man is to treat his fellow men with gentleness and courtesy.

—*Arabian Wisdom.*

The Being who remains awake while all sleep, who grants all desires, That is pure, That is Brahman, That alone is said to be immortal. As fire, though one, having entered the world, becomes various according to what it burns, so does the *Atman* (Self) within all living beings, though one, become various according to what it enters. It also exists outside. As air, though one, having entered the world, becomes various according to what it enters, so does the *Atman* within all living beings, though one, become various according to what it enters. It also exists outside. —*Katha Upanishad.*

It is not to Israel alone that God has spoken and revealed His will; nor even only to recognized prophets, whether in Israel or among the nations. But to all who have His work to do He speaks, much or little, clearly or in parables and visions, according to their needs and according to their fitness to hear and understand.

—*Wisdom of Israel.*

Is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not the God of the nations also? Yea, of the nations also.

—*Romans* 3:29.

God is one, but many are His aspects. As one master of the house appears in various relations, being father to one, brother to another, and husband to a third, so one Lord is called in various ways according to the particular aspect in which He appears to His devotee.

—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him.—*Acts* 10:35.

Men are members each of many,
The self-same stuff in all as any.
When fortune wrings a single limb,
Others sympathize with him.
How shouldst thou to man pertain
Who carest not for others' pain?—*Sadi.*

All this, whatsoever exists in the universe, should be covered by the Lord. He who sees all beings in the Self and the Self in all beings, he never turns away from the Self. He who perceives all beings as the Self, for him how can there be delusion or grief, when he sees this oneness everywhere? —*Isa Upanishad.*

The Tao of Heaven has no favourites. It gives to all good men without distinction.—*Laotzu.*

Wretch, will you not bear with your own brother, who hath God for his father, as being a son from the same stock, and of the same high descent? But if you chance to be placed in some superior station, will you presently set yourself up for a tyrant? Will you not remember what you are, and over whom you bear rule? That they are by nature your relations, your brothers: that they are the offspring of God?—*Epictetus.*

PRACTICAL RELIGION AND COMPARATIVE STUDY

By Swami Paramananda

Our object in surveying the world of religion and making a comparative study of it is not in any way to prove the supremacy of one over another, but to find a sympathetic chord which may serve as a common synthesis for all. When the great Parliament of Religions was convened in 1893 in connection with the Columbian Exposition held in Chicago, it met with no small opposition from the eminent dignitaries of the orthodox churches, and even from the prominent laymen. Some thought it was a sacrilege to admit that there was any true religion other than Christianity. After much discussion and opposition, when this great ideal of bringing diversified religions together became an actual fact, even then many devout Christians candidly believed that it was going to prove once for all the supremacy of Christianity over all other existing faiths, but its effect was quite the contrary. It proved that noble ideas and ideals were not exclusive to any country or nation, but were present among all peoples of the earth.

Since the latter part of the nineteenth century the comparative study of religion has been somewhat in vogue. Independent thinkers and learned men and women of all nations are now strongly advocating it; but, alas, in the major portion of literature which deals with comparative study, we cannot help but find a decided biased attitude. Some one starts with the idea of proving the exclusive superiority of his faith and compares it with other religious ideas and ideals with this special aim in view. We cannot expect any fairness in this method of dealing with the subject. Seeing through a biased mind is precisely like looking through the colored glass. We cannot judge

another if our mind is already prejudiced, and it is no small problem to overcome our prejudices, no matter what our ethical theories are in regard to virtue, universal tolerance and seeing good in others. With the rare exception of the few master-spirits of the world, it is difficult to find among mankind people who are free from prejudices and personal motives.

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven." This saying of Jesus the Christ to my mind gives the key to the problem. It is not the dogmatic religion that ennobles us or widens our vision, but it is the practical religion,—"doing the will of the Father." Herein lies the whole secret. A man may proclaim charity in a loud tone, but if he lacks charity in his heart, what avails? A religion comes to us with a claim of universal love and brotherhood of mankind, but if it manifests aggression and bitterness towards those who do not follow its tenets, what lasting effect will it have upon our mind?

We may pretend and play hypocrites in the world of commerce, in the field of science and politics, but in the realm of religion it is an utter impossibility. Some people acclaim their supremacy because of the great antiquity their religion possesses; others for its being ultra-modern; but the vitality and truth of its thought are not proved by either of these means. The earnest soul invariably cries out for its practical value, and the practical value is found not in the crust of dogma, but in the living flame of life itself. What proves that we are living? It is life's motion that testifies our existence, and if we possess high ideals they must be equally evidenced through our life's activities. A person who possesses a great treasure and

keeps it hidden, it neither profits him nor another. If you have a bright light, come out with it, let others see it and profit by it; but if you do not have it in your real and practical life, the theory of light is of little use either to yourself or to your fellow-beings.

This is my concept of practical religion which makes a great ideal living and real by looking upon which others may find strength, inspiration, joy and peace. When we view the world of religion from this angle, it at once takes a universal aspect. Whether this ideal is realized through the study of Jewish Kaballa, Sacred Book of the Babylonians, Egyptian Secret Codes, Greek Mythology, Chinese Wisdom, Vedic Revelation, or through the Christian Bible, is of small consequence. Men are brothers only when they realize consciously that they have a common Father. Before this realization dawns in the individual heart, no amount of theories of brotherhood will make him charitably inclined to another. "First seek ye the kingdom of Truth, all other things shall be added unto you." "Know thyself that thou mayst know all else." These are the true and fundamental thoughts of the spiritual world. If we do not abide by them and follow their saving diction, we are but led by the crooked paths of whims and self-will, although we may claim our alliance with high and lofty religions of the world. Our alliance must be from within and primarily with the One Infinite Source, Who knows no division or fraction, but is ever the same to all His creatures.

For myself I am certain that the good of human life cannot lie in the possession of things which for one man to possess is for the rest to lose, but rather in things which all can possess alike.—*B. Spinoza.*

AKBAR'S DREAM

By Alfred Lord Tennyson

Akbar was one of the noblest souls in history. He was a great Mogul emperor who lived in India during the latter part of the sixteenth century. The policy of his government was especially marked by his religious tolerance. We quote below the inscription written by Abul Fazl, Akbar's chief friend and adviser, for a Temple in Kashmir; and also a few passages from "Akbar's Dream" by Tennyson.

O God in every temple I see people that see Thee, and in every language I hear spoken, people praise Thee. Polytheism and Islam feel after Thee. Each religion says, "Thou art one, without equal." If it be a mosque people murmur the holy prayer, and if it be a Christian Church, people ring the bell from love to Thee. Sometimes I frequent the Christian cloister, and sometimes the mosque. But it is Thou Whom I search from temple to temple.

He knows Himself, men nor themselves nor Him,
For every splinter'd fraction of a sect
Will clamour "I am on the Perfect Way,
All else is to perdition."

Shall the rose
Cry to the lotus "No flower thou"? the palm
Call to the cypress "I alone am fair"?
The mango spurn the melon at his foot?
"Mine is the one fruit Allah made for man."
Look how the living pulse of Allah beats
Thro' all His world. If every single star
Should shriek its claim "I only am in heaven"
Why that were such sphere-music as the Greek
Had hardly dream'd of. There is light in all,
And light, with more or less of shade, in all
Man-modes of worship.

I dream'd
That stone by stone I rear'd a sacred fane,
A temple, neither Pagod, Mosque, nor Church,
But loftier, simpler, always open-door'd
To every breath from heaven, and Truth and Peace
And Love and Justice came and dwelt therein.

VALUE OF MANY-SIDED DEVELOPMENT

By Swami Vivekananda

We want to become harmonious beings, with the psychical, spiritual, intellectual and active side of our nature equally developed. Nations and individuals typify one of these sides or types and cannot understand more than that one. They get so built up into one ideal that they cannot see any other. The ideal is really that we should become many-sided. Indeed the cause of the misery of the world is that we are so one-sided that we cannot sympathize with each other. Consider a man looking at the sun from beneath the earth, up the shaft of a mine; he sees one aspect of the sun. Then another man sees the sun from the earth's level, another through mist and fog, another from the mountain top. To each the sun has a different appearance. So there are many appearances, but in reality there is only one sun. There is diversity of vision, but one object, and that is the sun.

Each man, according to his nature, has a peculiar tendency and takes to certain ideals and a certain path by which to reach them. But the goal is always the same to all. We must be as broad as the skies, as deep as the ocean; we must have the zeal of the fanatic, the depth of the mystic, and the width of the agnostic. The word "toleration" has acquired an unpleasant association with the conceited man who thinking himself in a high position looks

down on his fellow-creatures with pity. This is a horrible state of mind. We are all travelling the same way, towards the same goal, but by different paths made by the necessities of the case to suit diverse minds. We must become many-sided; indeed we must become Protean in character, so as not to tolerate but to do what is much more difficult, to sympathize, to enter into the other's path, and feel with him in his aspirations and seeking after God. There are two elements in every religion—a positive and a negative. In Christianity, for instance, when you speak of the incarnation of the Trinity, of salvation through Jesus Christ, I am with you. I say, "Very good, that I also hold true;" but when you go on to say, "There is no other true religion, there is no other revelation of God," then I say, "Stop I cannot go with you when you shut out, when you deny." Every religion has a message to deliver, something to teach man, but when it begins to protest, when it tries to disturb others, then it takes up a negative and therefore a dangerous position, and does not know where to begin or where to end. Every force completes a circuit. The force we call man starts from the infinite God and must return to Him. This return to God must be accomplished in one of two ways,—either by slowly drifting back, going to nature, or by our own inward power, which causes us to stop on our course, which would if left alone carry us in a circuit back to God, and violently turn round and find God, as it were, by a short cut. This is what the Yogi does.

I have said that every man must choose his Ideal which is in accord with his nature. This Ideal is man's *Ishtam*. You must keep it sacred, and when you worship God, worship according to your *Ishtam*. How are we to find out the particular method? It is very difficult, but as you persevere in your worship it will come of itself.

THE RETRIBUTION OF SELFISHNESS

A Popular Russian Legend as told by Prince Serge Wolkonsky

There was an old woman who for many centuries suffered tortures in the flames of hell, for she had been a great sinner during her earthly life. One day she saw far away in the distance an angel taking his flight through the blue skies; and with the whole strength of her voice she called to him. The call must have been desperate, for the angel stopped in his flight, and coming down to her asked her what she wanted.

"When you reach the throne of God," she said, "tell him that a miserable creature has suffered more than she can bear, and that she asks the Lord to be delivered from these tortures." The angel promised to do so and flew away. When he had transmitted the message God said: "Ask her whether she has done any good to any one during her life." The old woman strained her memory in search of a good action during her sinful past, and all at once: "I've got one," she joyfully exclaimed, "one day I gave a carrot to a hungry beggar."

The angel reported the answer. "Take a carrot," said God to the angel, "and stretch it out to her. Let her grasp it, and if the plant is strong enough to draw her out from hell she shall be saved." This the angel did. The poor old woman clung to the carrot. The angel began to pull, and lo! she began to rise! But when her body was half out of the flames she felt a weight at her feet. Another sinner was clinging to her. She kicked, but it did not help. The sinner would not let go his hold, and the angel, continuing to pull, was lifting them both. But, lo! another sinner clung to them, and then a third, and more and always more—a chain of miserable creatures hung at the old woman's feet. The

angel never ceased pulling. It did not seem to be any heavier than the small carrot could support, and they all were lifted in the air. But the old woman suddenly took fright. Too many people were availing themselves of her last chance of salvation, and kicking and pushing those who were clinging to her, she exclaimed: "Leave me alone; hands off; the carrot is mine." No sooner had she pronounced this word "mine" than the tiny stem broke, and they all fell back to hell, and forever.

INDIA AND HER THOUGHT

I

Brahmanism is one of the oldest religions of the world. It was flourishing in India at a period before history was written. It was coeval with the religion of Egypt in the time of Abraham, and perhaps at a still earlier date. But of its earliest form and extent we know nothing, except from the sacred poems of the Hindus called the Vedas, written in Sanskrit probably fifteen hundred years before Christ,—for even the date of the earliest of the Vedas is unknown. Fifty years ago we could not have understood the ancient religions of India. But Sir William Jones in the latter part of the last century, a man of immense erudition and genius for the acquisition of languages, at that time an English judge in India, prepared the way for the study of Sanskrit, the literary language of ancient India, by the translation and publication of the laws of Manu. He was followed in his labors by the Schlegels of Germany, and by numerous scholars and missionaries. Within fifty years this ancient and beautiful language has been so perseveringly studied that we know something of the people by whom it was once spoken,—even as Egyptologists have revealed some-

thing of ancient Egypt by interpreting the hieroglyphics; and Chaldaean investigators have found stores of knowledge in the Babylonian bricks.

The Sanskrit, as now interpreted, reveals to us the meaning of those poems called Vedas, by which we are enabled to understand the early laws and religion of the Hindus. It is poetry, not history, which makes this revelation, for the Hindus have no history farther back than five or six hundred years before Christ. It is from Homer and Hesiod that we get an idea of the gods of Greece, not from Herodotus or Xenophon.—*From "Beacon Lights of History" by John Lord.*

II

If one rushes through India one may indeed depart with little liking for India's swarming millions. But it is hard for me to conceive how one can stay any time among them without finding them a truly lovable people and without imbibing genuine respect and admiration for the simple dignity of their lives, the quiet courtesy of their manners, their uncomplaining endurance of hardships, their unbounded hospitality, and the feeling for spiritual values which, in spite of gross superstitions, is unmistakable in the Indian atmosphere. These things—or rather the memory of them—strike one, perhaps, most forcibly after his return from the East to the familiar sights and sounds of Western civilization. For my part, at any rate, in the rush of our city streets and the complacent satisfaction of our beer-gardens and our moving-picture shows, and amid the descriptions of war and hate and horror that fill every day's reports from Europe, I find myself thinking of the banks of the Ganges and the silent monasteries of Burma; just as I shall tell myself, in the midst of the snows and piercing winds which our coming New England

winter is already preparing for us, that the Irrawaddy is still pursuing its course to the sea between groves of flowering trees and banks crowned with golden pagodas, and that the roses are still blooming in Benares.

—From "India and Its Faiths" by James Bissett Pratt.

III

As I draw near to discern the elements of the Oriental consciousness, I find among them those that produce on me impressions of sublimity. Not without reflection do I use that term "sublimity." It is one of the noblest of words. The august word "sublimity," like one of your own Himalayan mountain peaks, rises on the field of English speech into the upper air of truth; its summit crowned with light, its base lost in the haze of distance. It signifies that which strikes the mind with a sense of grandeur or power. The invariable condition of the emotion of sublimity is vastness, power or intensity in the objects, material or moral, that produce it. I believe that in the Occidental consciousness as well as in the Oriental consciousness these are elements of sublimity. It is not my province to deal with the former in these lectures, but the time will come, I trust, when some mind, stronger and more skilled than my own, shall undertake in India an unprejudiced analysis of qualities in the consciousness of the West, which, when rightly understood, when seen in their ultimate relations to the soul, when studied in the spirit of love, may be declared, in the high court of India's most critical opinion, not unworthy to be called sublime.

From that ancient and most complex psychological mystery, which I have called the Oriental consciousness, I select four elements, each of which produces upon my Western powers of apprehension the impression of sublimity. They are these: The Contemplative Life; The

Presence of the Unseen; Aspiration Toward Ultimate Being; The Sanctions of the Past. —*From "Christ and the Eastern Soul" by Rev. Charles Cuthbert Hall.*

IV

India is not, as you may imagine, a distant, strange, or at the very utmost, a curious country. India for the future belongs to Europe, it has its place in the Indo-European world, it has its place in our own history, and in what is the very life of history, the history of the human mind.

You know how some of the best talent and the noblest genius of our age has been devoted to the study of the development of the outward or material world, the growth of the earth, the first appearance of living cells, their combination and differentiation, leading up to the beginning of organic life, and its steady progress from the lowest to the highest stages. Is there not an inward and intellectual world also which has to be studied in its historical development, from the first appearance of predicative and demonstrative roots, their combination and differentiation, leading up to the beginning of rational thought in its steady progress from the lowest to the highest stages? And in that study of the history of the human mind, in that study of ourselves, of our true selves, India occupies a place second to no other country. Whatever sphere of the human mind you may select for your special study, whether it be language, or religion, or mythology, or philosophy, whether it be laws or customs, primative art or primitive science, everywhere, you have to go to India, whether you like it or not, because some of the most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India, and in India only.

—*From "India: What Can It Teach Us?" by Max Muller.*

THE NEED OF COMPARATIVE STUDY

By Sir Monier Monier-Williams

It appears to me high time that all thoughtful Christians should reconsider their position, and—to use the phraseology of our modern physicists—readjust themselves to their altered environments. The sacred books of Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Islam, are now at length becoming accessible to all and the Christians can no longer neglect the duty of studying their contents. All the inhabitants of the world are being rapidly drawn together; Paul's grand saying—that God has made all nations of men of one blood—is being brought home to us more forcibly every day. Surely, then, we are bound to follow the example of Paul, who, speaking to the Gentiles, instead of denouncing them as "heathen," appealed to them as "very God-fearing" and even quoted a passage from one of their own poets in support of a Christian truth; and who directed Christians not to shut their eyes to anything true, honest, just, pure, lovely, or of good report, wherever it might be found, and exhorted them, that if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, they were to think on these things. Surely it is time we ceased to speak and act as if truth among Gentiles and truth among Christians were two wholly different things. Surely we ought to acknowledge and accept with gratitude whatever is true and noble in the Hindu character, or Hindu writings, while we reflect with shame on our own shortcomings under far greater advantages. Nor ought we to forget the words of Peter, when we label Brahmans, Buddists, Parsis, Muslims, and Fetish worshippers with the common label heathen. Peter, when addressing Gentiles, assured them that God had taught him not to call any man common or unclean; and declared that God was no respecter of persons, but

that in every nation he that feared Him and worked righteousness was accepted by Him. It is becoming more and more a duty for all the nations of the world to study each other; to inquire into and compare each other's systems of belief; to avoid expressions of contempt in speaking of the sincere and earnest adherents of any creed; and to search diligently whether the principles and doctrines which guide their own faith and conduct rest on truth or not.

NOBILITY OF GENEROSITY

Counsels of Nabi Efendi to his son Aboul Khair

(Turkish Philosopher and Poet. 17th Century.)

O thou who dost enumerate carefully the advantages of success, and dost consider the spectacle of refusals and welcomes, throw not a look of indifference on thy neighbor! Turn with interest to the unfortunate. Observe the rights of thy neighbors with justice; let the expression of thy countenance wound no one. Be not so parsimonious with thy food that thou canst not share it with others. Provide for their needs as much as possible. Let all the weak take refuge in the shadows of thy generosity! Do not entertain sentiments of hate and enmity against any one; do not acquire the habit of tumult and agitation. Beware of anger, rage, and revenge; show to no one a countenance furrowed with discontent.

Live on good terms with all the world and be always of an equable disposition. Do not annoy thy inferiors, nor impose upon them the constraint of cold formalities. Let not the expression of thy countenance grieve any one; captivate every one with thy good nature. Let no one be a victim of thy injustice, never return evil for evil. Be not a burden on thy friends, do not make thyself in-

supportable by thy bad disposition. Let no soul be in anguish for thee; rather labor to elevate those who are desperate. Bring no lawsuit against ony one, that God may preserve thee in turn from litigants. Do not compromise thy honor in this world and in the next for strange interests. Be neither guardian, counsellor, nor trustee.

Fly the domain of chicanery; do not rush into profitless agitation with lowered head. He who enters into quarrelling and strife with others brings down upon himself trouble and anxiety. Never follow the road of disputes and strife, for they provoke the flames of hatred! Raise not a finger to do evil: let one of thy hands be always busy in doing good. Carry not thy complaints to the door of the prince; refer to God's tribunal him who hath wronged thee. However great be thy weakness and impotence, will the Lord therefore be less zealous for thy defence? Resigned and modest, be without care and without anxiety.

Never reply harshly; when thou speakest to any one let it be with sweet courtesy. Reproach no one face to face with his hidden faults; lend to his discourse a friendly ear. Never expose the ignorance of any one. Why cover with confusion a creature of God? Renounce injustice and violence; never utter harsh words that wound the heart. Be generous, whatever happens, O soul of my soul; let thy tongue outrage no one! To wound thy brother to the heart is the worst of sins, the greatest of all iniquities. Labor with ardor to raise up those who have fallen; wouldst thou desire to overthrow the throne of the Lord? Avoid reproaching others for their blindness in sin, and declaring thyself free from stain. O soul of thy father, know well; when thou dost accuse thy brother, thou dost render thyself guilty.

WHO ART THOU LORD?

By Katharine F. Sherwood

Fain would I give myself to Thee
And worship at Thy Sacred Shrine.
A craving in my hungry heart
Upreaches toward the things divine.
Love moves me, and I long to lose
    myself in adoration blessed—
But who art Thou? How shall I know
    if Thou canst hear the words confessed?
Art Thou a Being far from me
With heart and body, soul and mind?
Or art Thou Energy Itself
The Cause of earth and humankind?
Art Thou the Spirit of this earth,
Art Thou the Power that moves my speech?
Art Thou the Light behind the sun?
Art Thou the Life within the life?
The Force that makes all nature one?
Art Thou the Spirit of this earth
The all-pervading Essence of each part?
Art Thou the Breath that makes us live?
Art Thou the Life-beat of each heart?
If this be true and Thou art Essence,
    Breath and Life
Thou art no longer far from me
In truth my very Self Thou art
    and greater far
Than I have ever thought myself to be.
If Thou art all and yet in me a part,
Then I am one with Thee, O thought sublime.
Thou art my Self—I live because of Thee
And knowing this I am divine.
Then what to worship? Where to bend the knee?

If Thou my Self the Essence art?
It is the little "self" the "I" I see
That bows before the greater part.
So vast the thought—I cannot hold it quite
At first so real, it vanishes like mist—
I reach the summit but I fall again
I cannot keep the place I wished.
Around I see so many forms
And every form a name attends,
If I would make Thee real to me
Then name and form must serve that end.
And though Thou art my Self in very truth
I call Thee Father—Brother—Friend—
For by such names I bring to me
The closest feeling, and the knee I bend.
I ask for help—for courage and for peace
And know that Thou wilt give them me.
For art Thou not my very Self
And anxious for my good to be?
And when in meditation I
Can rise above the things I see,
And lost in contemplation high
Become absorbed and one with Thee,
Detain me, Lord: infill me quite
With Thy full life, and let me know
    my oneness so complete,
That when I touch the earth again
I may not lose the blessing, but can meet
The daily life with calm and blissful heart
And unto others of my kind the same
    eternal bliss impart.
So is my question answered. Not again
I need to ask, Lord Who art Thou?
But finding, following, trusting, leaning,
Worship I may and gladly do I bow.

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL DINNER

There is no occasion in the whole round of the year's activities more joyous than that of the annual dinner. We all refer to it as the Swami's dinner for it is literally that. He plans for it, he prepares it and also serves it, and those who have the privilege of assisting him in this are blessed in seeing what joy each task can afford when work is not distinguished from worship. The Swami's guests are frank in their anticipation of his dinner, for many inquired beforehand when it is to be so that they might arrange their plans accordingly. Each year the joy seems to grow as the number of guests increases. This year there were about a hundred, the limit being due to lack of space alone. In his welcoming speech Swami Paramananda expressed his intention of having out-of-door dinners in California where he might entertain on a much larger scale. Already there are many in Boston who hope themselves to witness such an event.

Those of our number who are at Ananda Ashrama sent their greetings by wire announcing that they too would keep feast time with us, and that on the date of the dinner (June 14th) the first building of cottages was to begin and a new garden to be ploughed. Their message was signed "Ashrama Pioneers" a name of which they may well be proud.

The dinner, as usual, was served in the library and chapel thrown together, the long tables extending into the hall. The screen behind the Swami's chair at the head table was banked with flowers, also the bookcases, the mantle and the organ were completely covered with them. For beauty nothing surpassed the golden sunshine and chaste outline of the day lilies; peonies contributed mass and fra-

grance, while an unusual abundance of sweet syringa added delicacy and perfume. Against this profuse background of green and flowers, the white linen of the tables with the tall candles and dainty vases of flowers looked very beautiful.

The guests began arriving about seven and by seven thirty all were seated. Dainty menu cards printed on tinted Japanese paper only aroused the curiosity of the guests, for who could tell what "Begooni Crisp" "Curry Chamatkar" or "Salad Surprise of Chana" meant? Each one of the nine courses on the menu appeared like a product from wonderland. To many it was a revelation of what a vegetarian dinner might be, while one guest spoke of it as "poetic cooking" an expression which truly described it. At the close of the dinner all the little glasses were filled with a specially refreshing drink which the Swami had created. Before drinking an opportunity was given for toasts when one of the faithful members, Miss Agnes Raymond, surprised us all by making a toast in the form of an acrostic, the initial letters spelling down the Swami's name and the whole expressing a rare tribute of devotion and appreciation of what the Swami's life in our midst has meant to us. Deep feeling mingled with gladness as Swami, raising his glass, said "To you all" and every one rising joined him in this fitting expression of a common bond of spirit. A special toast was made for Ananda Ashrama and all its pioneers present and future. When all were again seated the Swami called for speeches. Mr. C. C. Nelson, Mr. Joseph Mahoney and Mr. Ennis spoke spontaneously expressing in different ways the practical value and help they found in the teaching. There was no formality but simply a free expression of the fullness of their heart. Mrs. Joseph Mahoney, well known as a writer under the name of Bangs Burgess, and an ardent California enthus-

iast, gave a beautiful description of a trip she took through the main canyons of that State and especially made vivid the beauty and grandeur of the rare yucca blossoms which many devoutly call "candles of the Lord." She read several nature poems, some of them original, descriptive of various aspects of beauty. We quote here one of Mrs. Mahoney's poems written in appreciation after the dinner.

TO SWAMI PARAMANANDA

Midst eager, loud, contending throng,
Untouched by evil thought
Nor dwarfed by craft or guile or greed;
A radiant soul of all compassing love,
Sage of an age-long wisdom,
Master of earthly lore,
Serene and humble,
Meek, unvexed, unswerved,
He goes his way of duty
With the simple sweetness of a child.

Miss K. F. Sherwood and Dr. Gerda v. B. Perry brought out the dramatic effect of one of the Swami's unpublished poems called "Sun and Twilight" by rendering it in dialogue form. The Swami was called upon several times to make comments or answer questions. When it was time to close the evening, flowers were distributed to all the guests and so ended a happy occasion which will ever abide in our memory.

REVIEW

We cannot resist sharing with our readers the following unusual review which appeared in the May issue of the Vedanta Kesari, India. It is different from the ordinary review and is more like a commentary. We take pleasure, therefore, in reproducing it as it appeared, but giving only portions of the poems and omitting entirely the "Hymn of Adoration" which appeared in the October, 1922, issue of the "Message of the East."

Those who have read the prose works of the author of "The Path of Devotion," have felt a peculiar fascination in them. A book of poems such as the one that is presented now has been long expected. As the outpourings of a devotional soul, the seventy-two poems contained in the "Soul's Secret Door" have in them the power of communicating to the reader's heart the painless pain of longing for the Lord.

Whither lies the source of poesy? The reed pipe when touched by the lips of the Divine Cowherd of Brindaban

showers forth strains of soul-stirring melody. Thus doth the Lord's whisper fill the heart of the devotee with unending song:

> Thy whisper hath filled my soul with an unending song.
> In noise and stillness, in crowd and alone, Thy
> gentle tone is always in my ear.

The Lord Himself is the Mysterious Guide to the unknown land of eternal bliss.

> Come hither, O friend, I shall tell thee the secret
> of this unknown land.
> Let us shut the outer gates and the inner doors.
> Have no fear or doubt, for the strange Guide to
> this unknown land is marvellous wise.
> He knoweth our unacted acts, nay, even our unformed
> thoughts, our life's pulsation and every heart-
> string in His grasp.

Complete self-surrender to the Lord brings to the devotee a feeling of utmost safety. "Not I, my Beloved Lord, but Thou Who knowest what is good for me" is the burden of the devotee's song.

> It is best that Thou dost hold my hand and lead me
> where'er Thou deemest.
> I shall follow Thee now with unfaltering faith.

The mystery of Divine Grace is expressed in the following poem which lends the title to the collection.

> I seek no more for I have found Him, not by seeking,—
> He came to me when I was not looking,
> Opening my soul's secret door.
> Friend, how can I tell thee of this strange mystery?
> He is seen unsought only through this, the soul's
> secret door.

The "Hymn of Adoration" the closing poem of the collection is a poetic gem and exhibits the artless art of the saintly poet.

Every one of the poems has a charm of its own and it is not possible to do justice to the work by commenting upon it in a general way or by quoting stray poems. We can only say that the "Soul's Secret Door" makes a distinct addition to devotional literature and that the country which has given birth to Jayadev, Kabir, Tulsidas, Tukraram, Ram Prasad, Thiyagaraja and Gnana Sambhanda continues to be the birth-place of saintly poets who by the charm of their song could lead the wayward soul Godwards.

REPORT

The friends and members of The Vedanta Centre of Boston extended a very warm and loving welcome to Swami Prakashananda of the San Francisco Hindu Temple when he was entertained here on his return from his recent visit to India. During the week of his stay at the Centre, Swami Paramananda asked him to conduct the regular Tuesday evening class and also made special arrangements for the Sunday evening Service at which Swami Prakashananda addressed a much larger and more representative Boston audience. His subject was "Divine Inspiration" and his message was received with marked interest and appreciation.

Two younger members of the Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Raghavananda and Swami Prabhavananda, arrived with Swami Prakashananda from India to assist respectively in the work now being carried on in New York and San Francisco. Naturally it is with deepest and most cordial feeling that we bid welcome and Godspeed especially to the new Swamis.

* * * *

During Swami Paramananda's absence from Ananda Ashrama the Sunday Services were faithfully carried on by Sister Daya. It is hoped that during the next few months a great deal will be accomplished in organizing this new phase of the work. Swami Paramananda will personally conduct the public open air services held every Sunday afternoon at 3:30 beginning with July the 15th. His addresses will be on Practical and Productive Religion.

The Ashrama will be open to visitors certain days. Those who desire any special information in regard to the California work please address:

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Message of the East

OCTOBER, 1923

PSYCHOLOGY OF THOUGHT

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Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.
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DIVINE MOTHER HEART

By Swami Paramananda

GREAT MOTHER HEART, how tender art Thou!
Thy love, transcending all mine iniquities,
Pours upon my life its benign sweetness.
How oft my imperfect nature lies mortified and ashamed in Thy protecting bosom, overwhelmed by Thy unfathomed tenderness!
Who art Thou that givest this endless bounty to me, meritless and ignorant?

Divine Mother Heart, proof of Thy unceasing care I find in every turn of life.
With many arms dost Thou shield me;
With many hearts dost Thou love me;
With many minds dost Thou guide me to the road of safety.

Forget I may at times when dark clouds gather;
But to have seen Thy face of love
And known what is not known, save when Thou dost lift the veil,
Is joy forever and crowning glory of life!

Written August 19, 1923
Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, California

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

It is the mind that makes one wise or ignorant, bound or emancipated. One is holy because of his mind, one is wicked because of his mind, one is a sinner because of his mind, and it is the mind that makes one virtuous. So he whose mind is always fixed on God requires no other practices, devotion, or spiritual exercises.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, think on these things.—*St. Paul.*

By inaction one can become the centre of thought, the focus of responsibility, the arbiter of wisdom. Full allowance must be made for others, while remaining unmoved one's self. There must be a thorough compliance with divine principles, without any manifestation thereof. All of which may be summed up in the one word, tranquillity. For the perfect man employs his mind as a mirror. It grasps nothing; it refuses nothing. It receives, but does not keep. And thus he can triumph over matter, without injury to himself.—*Chuang Tzu.*

As he thinketh in his heart, so is he. Apply thine heart unto instructions and thine ears to the words of knowledge.
—*Proverbs.*

Thou art but an atom, He the great whole; but if for a few days thou meditate with care on the whole, thou becomest one with it.—*Jami.*

Make yourself nests of pleasant thoughts. None of us yet know, for none of us have been taught in early youth, what fairy palaces we may build of beautiful thought—proof against all adversity. Bright fancies, satisfied memories, noble

histories, faithful sayings, treasure-houses of precious and restful thoughts, which care cannot disturb, nor pain make gloomy, nor poverty take away from us,—houses built without hands, for our souls to live in.—*John Ruskin.*

Twice blessed be the man that reflects long before he acts! One that reflects long before he acts is certainly possessed of great intelligence. Such a man never offends in respect of any act.—*Mahabharata.*

A man sins in thought when he thinks aught against God, if he occupies his heart not with the praise and loving of God, but suffers it to be abstracted or stirred with divers thoughts, and to go void in the world.—*Richard Rolle.*

To overcome sorrow and win happiness men wander in vain, for they have not sanctified their thought, the mysterious essence of holiness. Then I must keep my thought well governed and well guarded; what need is there of any vows save the vow to guard the thought?—*Santi-Deva.*

A rush of thoughts is the only conceivable prosperity that can come to us. Fine clothes, equipages, villa, park, social consideration, cannot cover up real poverty and insignificance, from my own eyes or from others like mine. Thoughts let us into realities. Neither miracle nor magic nor any religious tradition, not the immortality of the private soul is incredible, after we have experienced an insight, a thought. I think it comes to some men but once in their life, sometimes a religious impulse, sometimes an intellectual insight. But what we want is consecutiveness.—*Emerson.*

Fill thy mind with Me, be thou My devotee, worship Me and bow down to Me; thus, steadfastly uniting thy heart with Me alone and regarding Me as thy Supreme Goal, thou shalt come unto Me.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

PSYCHOLOGY OF THOUGHT

By Swami Paramananda

"Thoughts are things." This simple sentiment so often expressed by us has far greater significance than we usually attach to it. Our thoughts become concrete things in our life. Thoughts produce actions and actions produce like reactions. Thus all our happiness and unhappiness, success and failure and the endless multiplicity of moods and feelings are but fruits and flowers from the tree of life, first existing in the seed form of thought.

In the Dhammapada we read: "All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts; it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage. All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him like a shadow that never leaves him." The whole psychology of thought phenomena can be summed up in these two ideas. We, as a rule, do not observe the subtle cause but deal largely with the effect. For instance, we observe a flower in blossom or a plant that is withered, but neither blossoming nor withering is through chance. The causes often are hidden due to their abstract quality and subtlety, but they are never separated from all the effects that are produced in the phenomenal world. If we ever experience any happiness there is a very definite reason for it. Likewise whenever we experience unhappiness there is also a definite reason for that. We are all keenly interested in doing things that will earn happiness and safeguard our well-being, but these we cannot earn merely through the action of our hands without first creating the foundation of right thought. In fact there can-

not be any true standard for right living without the basic principle of right thinking.

People whose outer life is intensely active are inclined to misunderstand the significance of such a theme and may imagine that giving too much eminence to thought is apt to lead to morbidity. But this is only due to surface observation. Thought does not necessarily mean inaction. On the contrary, thought generates action both in the mind and in the body. This can be easily verified by every individual. Whenever we are engaged in concentrated thought, it immediately produces a certain vibration which results in making the body tense or mobile. Sometimes our thoughts cause us to feel dull, heavy, melancholy; again they generate such tremendous force that we feel we are not touching the ground. When we are walking, if the mind is charged with some powerful thought, it carries the body; unconsciously we walk faster. The weight of the body is lifted by the velocity of thought. These are not fancies, they are actual facts, but often they go unobserved and that is why we lay greater stress on action than on thought. If we are not able to understand the fundamental value of right thinking, then all our high ideals will be of little avail. No one can create great things merely with his hands or his material assets. He must be sustained by noble thoughts.

Thought is most potent in moulding our destiny. But do not imagine that all we have to do is to sit and think and everything will come to us. That will bring us nothing; it is inconsistent. If a man is animated by lofty thoughts and high aspirations, what is the most immediate thing for him to do? He seeks to express them; he strives to make them real. Thought and action are inseparable and they must always be inseparable just as a tree and its root. You cannot conceive of a tree living and flowering if severed from

its root. So is it with our life and all its multiplicity of thoughts and feelings.

Every man who turns his attention inward sooner or later must realize that there is no such thing as accident. It is only the man of limited understanding, the man who does not see beyond the scope of the phenomenal, who says: It happened by chance; I did it in a moment of impulse. All that we do is the result of certain lines of thought. Not very long ago there was an article in a magazine, a discussion in regard to a criminal case: a judge had sentenced a youth of seventeen. Many thought he should have shown more mercy. They argued that the boy was ignorant, that he had acted on impulse. The judge cross-questioned this youth and found that it was not at all a momentary impulse, that for months he had brooded deliberately over this idea of robbing a bank. The idea came to him first as a simple thought, then it ground into his very being, became part of his life, and when the outer opportunity offered, he fell. Our happiness is not through chance, and our unhappiness is not through chance. It is better to understand this from the very beginning because it will help us to eliminate unrest from our own minds and to free the minds of others. When we live only on the surface of life, then we feel the unrest in ourselves and in the world, and only when we see things from the surface, do we say it was an accident. There is always a deep underlying cause. Chance is the notion of idle people; they are constantly looking for miracles and miracles never come to them. Miracles come only to those who are awakened, who are pure and exalted in spirit. They alone can perceive what the world calls miracles.

When things go wrong with us, when we allow ourselves to be mentally disturbed, we find many excuses. We explain that it was because of other people,—their thoughts, their

influence upon us, their actions. "He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me," we complain; but when we realize that nothing can really have any disturbing or harmful effect upon us, once we are purified within, then all idea of complaining falls away from us. If we hold hateful, unkind thoughts, unhappiness will never cease for us, hatred will never cease. Happiness has nothing to do with how much we have or how little; it does not depend on where we are placed or in what circumstances. Material conditions do not secure for us our peace. It is entirely the quality of mind. The small mind sees the limited; the big mind sees the unlimited. The vision of limitation is our own creation and the vision of the unlimited is a quality of our unfoldment. We have heard this many times and we may have to hear it many more times, because we do not always hear with the inner ear. Our inner life does not always respond to these sayings. It is a question of unfoldment, and unfoldment of our real nature is not possible save from within. Outer things we can have done for us by others, but the inner things we must do for ourselves. In modern life we forget this; we like to have people think things out for us. But there is no one who can think for us and make us wise. It is a very great tragedy when we are overcome by such spiritual lethargy.

There are certain invariable laws. There is the law of compensation. It is very definitely stated: "If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage." But compensation does not mean merely reward and punishment. It means that everything which comes to us, good, evil, and mixed, comes only because we ourselves have made it possible. We sow the seeds by our own thoughts.

"He who lives looking for pleasure only, his senses un-

controlled, immoderate in his food, idle and weak, *Mara,* the tempter, will certainly overthrow him, as the wind throws down a weak tree." What is this tempter? Here is a point of dogma. Some people believe in a personal devil. The devil does exist, but in the individual himself. In India they call it the ego. "There is no enemy so potent, so hostile, so difficult to conquer as the ego." We may have all the blessings the world can give, but if the ego is rampant we shall know neither rest nor happiness. Ego always demands. If we have little, it wants more. If we have more, it wants everything. It sets us on fire. Ambition is like that. It consumes us. We can have no chance for peace or stability so long as we follow these lower propensities. And how do they first get their hold on us? Through our thoughts. We have the power to transform our life by changing our mode of thinking. In the Upanishads, one of the most ancient Scriptures of India, this is given very simply and directly: "Mind alone is the cause of man's bondage, and mind alone is the cause of his liberation."

We are born with certain tendencies, with a natural spirit of nobility, or the reverse. When we say we inherit it from our parents, we give a very unsatisfactory explanation. The individual himself sowed the seeds of good or evil in the soil of his life—not this small span of life necessarily. There is a connecting link with other existences. Our life did not begin with this physical body. Our whole evolution and freedom do not depend upon these few short years of living. Our book of destiny will never be complete nor shall we be able to read one complete line of it, until we connect the present existence with what has gone before. Then we shall see even more fully than we do now that if a man thinks kind thoughts and performs kind acts, if his intentions are pure, happiness will follow him like a shadow and it will never

leave him. You may deny this. You may say that the good suffer; they are often cheated and robbed and they meet with calamity. That is true, but they never suffer as do the ignorant. Whatever we earn by our own merit, that no one can take from us. We see this at every turn. A noble soul may be deprived of many of the blessings of this material existence. His enemies may torment him, but they cannot touch what is his birthright, they cannot rob him of his peace. A man who commits a crime through brooding evil thought, tries to escape from pain but he cannot. Where do we feel pain most? In the mind. We cannot do something harmful to another without suffering. That is the reason the Bible teaches—love thy neighbor as thyself. Why should one love one's neighbor as one's self? In the Vedic Upanishad the wise sage tells his disciple: My son, verily thou art thine own neighbor. From the point of view of soul we cannot rob some one without robbing ourselves. We rob our own dignity, we rob our own peace, we rob the finer things in our life. We cannot harm some one without harming ourselves. We cannot cheat the greater law, and a wise person not only never wants to evade the law, he wishes to benefit by it.

Thought is a power—a power for good and a power for evil. If we do not direct the mind through the proper channels of kindness, wisdom, love and all things that are constructive, it will find other avenues that will be perhaps destructive. Here is our responsibility. You may say everything is done through Divine Will, why should we then have responsibility? If we have reached that point of surrender and vision where we can perceive the Divine Will, then we are rid of responsibility; but there are very few of us who can say sincerely that we abide by the Divine Will, that we have no individual desires. So long as we have desires, so long as we have ambition, so long as we have the play of any

of these emotions, we must direct them through the right channels.

Every intelligent human being knows the law of life: As a man thinks, so is he. It is the supreme secret. To possess the knowledge of it gives the greatest power. But if we know it only superficially it does not benefit us. How few there are who are able to apply it! We all know that if we surround ourselves with thoughts of love and purity, they safeguard us, they build a tremendous barricade of protection around us, and yet in spite of our mental grasp of this, when some one has offended us or injured us, we allow these incidents to absorb all our thoughts. If we let our mind be filled with evil thoughts and sordid feelings, if we allow it to be clouded by envy, jealousy and anger, can we expect to find peace? The more we brood, the more our mind becomes colored with our brooding. It gradually poisons our whole being. Yet the same mind which feels itself incapable of anything good or lofty can become potent, victorious, its own liberator. Sometimes we become hypnotized by the idea of weakness and inability. No one can help us so long as we allow ourselves to remain under that influence. Its antidote is to have the counteracting idea—I am strong. Even though we cannot say it with conviction, if we are in earnest, if our spirit is desirous of throwing off the weakness, we shall find that gradually like the sun it will dispell all the dark clouds and bring us strength. Sometimes this is called affirmation. It creates an opportunity for the mind to make its contact with that which is all-powerful. Not by dwelling on weakness do we get rid of weakness. It is rather by dwelling on strength that we become strong. It is by dwelling on light that we conquer darkness; it is by dwelling on wisdom that we overcome ignorance.

No one can give us salvation. You may say, it is not so.

If we follow religion we shall be saved. But following religion means living religion. It is not by professing creeds or attaching importance to rituals that we become spiritual. It is when our life and our belief correspond, when there is no inconsistency—mind and mouth working together, thought and action running harmoniously. That is the whole psychology of existence. To-day, particularly in America, people have become interested in what they call Practical Psychology. It is indeed most practical; but do not for a moment think that true psychology of thought can be lowered to the plane of petty desires, that it can be used to satisfy the longing for a new hat or a new coat, or that by sitting down and concentrating one can acquire prosperity or some such small end. No! True psychology brings an expanded consciousness. We testify to our faith by our actions, by our very being. You may ask, are we capable of this? We are as capable of it as of something small and insignificant. The same amount of energy we expend in idle talk, in imagining things which never come to a focus, if concentrated and directed, would give us power to accomplish mighty things.

Every thought becomes a reality—kind thoughts and unkind thoughts. This should not carry with it any idea of doom even to the selfish and ignorant. We can redeem ourselves no matter where we stand or how we stand. We can remould our life to a great extent. Some may think it is an egotistic notion, that a man should take the responsibility of moulding his life. If he thinks that he alone does it, if he does not take account of a higher Power, it will be egotistic and he is bound to fail. But he cannot be egotistic if his motive is pure, if his heart is kind, if he has a sense of consecration. These feelings will lead him to the higher Ideal.

Self-dejection is the greatest enemy we can possibly have.

Man should remember that he has the spark of Divinity within himself. Whatever may be his philosophy or religion makes no difference. There is no one who does not have a faith, call it what he will. Let him cling to that; let him fasten his whole being to that and he will be inspired to redeem himself. The power of inspiration is within us and we must awaken it. The man who is hungry and thirsty for happiness will find it if he creates a foundation of pure thoughts and noble ideals. If we have that foundation within us, even though we are condemned and ridiculed by the whole world, we shall walk in safety. If we have it not, the whole world may befriend us and yet we shall feel unhappy. Pain follows him who acts with selfish purpose. Happiness follows him who acts with pure motive. These two eternal principles are ever before us, simple, direct, scientific, logical and true.

We need people of character more than men of action. It is very dangerous to enter into this arena of activity without meditative thought. A man plunges into the field of action without co-ordinated thought, and what is the result? He does things which have to be undone. This means waste and waste means not only loss of time and energy, but moral dejection. Therefore we must think first, deep down within our own being, and to our thought add spiritual reflection. There is no human being so depraved that he cannot look up to his Creator. This process of keeping our channel clear and free so that we may have unbroken access to the Highest is the sum and substance of religion. All other things are side issues.

Love brings love. Kindness brings kind feelings. If we are capable of sending love from our hearts, should we not then gather good results from the tree of life? If we approach some one with kindness and meet with no response,

let us not be discouraged or faint-hearted. There is no haste in the spiritual world. Eternity is before us and behind us and all about us. When our heart is thus pregnant with lofty thoughts we shall reap the rich fruition of true spiritual blessing.

HOLY ART THOU

Hermes Trismegistus

Holy art Thou, O God, the universal Father.

Holy art Thou, O God, whose Will perfects itself by means of its own powers.

Holy art Thou, O God, who willeth to be known and art known by Thine own.

Holy art Thou, who didst by Word make to consist the things that are.

Holy art Thou, of whom all-nature hath been made an image.

Holy art Thou, whose form nature hath never made.

Holy art Thou, more powerful than all power.

Holy art Thou, transcending all pre-eminence.

Holy Thou art, Thou better than all praise.

Accept my reason's offerings pure, from soul and heart for aye stretched up to Thee, O Thou unutterable, unspeakable, whose Name naught but the silence can express.

Give ear to me who pray that I may ne'er of Knowledge fail, which is our common being's nature; and fill me with Thy power, and with this grace of Thine, that I may give the Light to those in ignorance of the race, my brethren, and Thy sons.

For this cause I believe, and I bear witness; I go to Life and Light. Blessed art Thou, O Father. Thy man would holy be as Thou art holy, e'en as Thou gavest him Thy full authority to be.

UTILITY OF THOUGHT

From Marcus Aurelius Antoninus

Do not waste the remainder of thy life in thoughts about others, when thou dost not refer thy thoughts to some object of common utility. For thou losest the opportunity of doing something else when thou hast such thoughts as these,—What is such a person doing, and why, and what is he saying, and what is he thinking of, and what is he contriving, and whatever else of the kind makes us wander away from the observation of our own ruling power. We ought then to check in the series of our thoughts everything that is without a purpose and useless, but most of all the over-curious feeling and the malignant; and a man should use himself to think of those things only about which if one should suddenly ask, What hast thou now in thy thoughts? with perfect openness thou mightest immediately answer, this or that; so that from thy words it should be plain that everything in thee is simple and benevolent, and such as befits a social animal, and one that cares not for thoughts about pleasure or sensual enjoyments at all, nor has any rivalry or envy and suspicion, or anything else for which thou wouldst blush if thou shouldst say that thou hadst it in thy mind.

The man who is such, and no longer delays being among the number of the best, is like a priest and minister of the gods, using too the deity which is planted within him, which makes the man uncontaminated by pleasure, unharmed by any pain, untouched by any insult, feeling no wrong, a fighter in the noblest fight, one who cannot be overpowered by any passion, dyed deep with justice, accepting with all his soul everything which happens and is assigned to him as his portion; and not often, nor yet without great necessity and for the general interest, imagining what another says, or does, or thinks. For it is only what belongs to himself that he

makes the matter of his activity; and he constantly thinks of that which is allotted to himself out of the sum total of things, and he makes his own acts fair, and he is persuaded that his own portion is good. For the lot which is assigned to each man is carried along with him and carries him along with it. And he remembers also that every rational animal is his kinsman, and that to care for all men is according to man's nature; and a man should hold on to the opinion not of all, but of those only who confessedly live according to nature. But as to those who live not so, he always bears in mind what kind of men they are both at home and from home, both by night and by day, and what they are, and with what men they live an impure life. Accordingly, he does not value at all the praise which comes from such men, since they are not even satisfied with themselves.

O SOUL OF MINE

By Jacopone da Todi

O Soul of mine, how noble wert thou made!
Be not afraid,
Nor deem thy nature low;
Thou art not so,
High is thy birth, and lordly thine estate.

So high and in such honour wert thou born,
Thy nature's morn
Awaked in gentlehood.
Ponder the grace and beauty thou hast worn,
So shalt thou scorn all else with fortitude.
Naught here is good,—no creature fair enough;
No earthly stuff deserves thy heart's desire;
God is thy Sire,
To Him be consecrate.

MATTER, MIND AND SELF

Brahmavadin

We have now seen that Sankara, in his analysis of matter and mind, arrives at a principle of unity, unknown and unknowable, which he calls *Sat* and *Chit,* from the objective and subjective standpoints respectively. These are nothing but "the matter in itself" and "the mind in itself" of some of our modern metaphysicians. For instance, both Kant and Hamilton, though from methods different from those of Sankara, have arrived at conclusions exactly the same. Hamilton says that the secondary properties of matter are only the mental effects produced by the action of certain modifications of the primary on the organism, whereas the primary qualities are perceived as they are in bodies. Still, what we know of matter is only through its primary qualities; and the matter in itself apart from the primary qualities remains unknown and unknowable. In the same way he seems to think that what we know of mind is only its modifications as made known to us through consciousness. But what it is in itself, apart from those modifications, we do not and cannot know. But Sankara goes further and says that there are no two distinct entities as "matter in itself" and "mind in itself." They are one and the same substance or being, which manifests itself as the knower with all his faculties on the one hand, and the known as limited by attributes on the other.

The doctrine of Herbert Spencer, that the Absolute is unknown and unknowable, and that what we know is only phenomenal, approaches more nearly the conclusion of Sankara than that of any other modern agnostic philosopher. Spencer regards both mind and matter as parallel manifestations of the Absolute; rather he takes matter as the primary manifestation, and mind only as a secondary one, as it always

implies material conditions to manifest its activities. But Sankara, consistently with his Absolute Idealism, looks upon mind as the primary manifestation and matter as only a mode of mind.

The analysis of the totality of existences, according to Sankara, thus leads us to two factors, mutually contrasted by permanence and change; the permanent Reality or God, that underlies all phenomena on the one hand, and the changing universe of phenomena on the other. The two co-exist and cannot be confounded one with the other. God is the one unchanging universal plane in which the whole drama of the cosmic process is enacted. The one is not the cause of the other; for the Absolute Being unchangeable can in no way be connected with an effect which implies change. Nor can we regard them as two independent realities which constitute the totality of things, because the one is Absolute, the other relative; the one is Infinite, the other finite. The European Pantheists agree with the school of Sankara that God is the only substance, the only reality, that underlies the changing appearances of all finite things and persons. But by making God co-substantial and co-extensive with the finite universe they fall into the absurdity of supposing that the Absolute Reality is at once finite and infinite, the substance and the mode, undifferentiated and determined in necessary forms. This error is removed by Sankara and his school by their doctrine of *Maya,* according to which the universal process is no reality but an illusion superimposed on the absolute and infinite existence by the thinker (the ego) who is himself a fictitious self-limitation of the Absolute.

This principle of illusion is supposed to be at the very root of our knowledge of things, and cannot, therefore, be demonstrated by any process of perception or logical inference, in both of which it is involved. But its existence can be

proved by sort of analogical reasoning from an illusory experience in perception. We sometimes mistake, in our perceptive experience, a rope for a serpent; mother of pearl for silver. Just in the same way it is, according to this monism, that we superimpose our mental creations on the Absolute and call them phenomena. Therefore, man's highest goal, or what is called the attainment of liberation (*Moksha*), involves the complete realization of the illusory nature of the cosmos, and the absolute unity behind all phenomena in *Brahman*. To this end he must, by a sort of ecstatic trance, rid himself of all the illusory appearances of the world; nay, even of his thought emotions and volitions. He must keep his mind completely insensible to all external impressions. All mental modifications, whether determined from within or without, ought to be avoided; so that the self may abide in its essential nature of absolute unity.

This is what the monistic philosophers call absorption into God-head, or the merging of the individual in the universal soul. To this state we approach every day in deep sleep. In sleep, the self exists in its real unity, untrammeled by the illusory phenomena of both internal and external experiences. The only difference between this and the state of *Kaivalya* (abiding in the self) is that, in sleep, illusion exists in a potential condition and takes us back to the world of phenomena on waking; whereas, in the other, the illusion becomes completely extinct, and the self is left in its essential state of absolute unity, or the all in all.

Heed not distressing thoughts when they rise ever so strongly in thee; nay, though they have entered thee, fear them not, but be still awhile, not believing in the power which thou feelest they have over thee, and it will fall on a sudden.

—*I. Penington.*

KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE OF TRUTH

By Swami Vivekananda

The might of the universe is within you. "Why weepest thou, my friend? There is neither birth nor death for thee. Why weepest thou? There is no disease nor misery for thee, but thou art like the infinite sky; clouds of various colors come over it, play for a moment, then vanish. But the sky is ever the same eternal blue." Why do we see wickedness? There was a stump of a tree, and in the dark, a thief came that way and said, "That is a policeman." A young man waiting for his beloved saw it and thought that it was his sweetheart. A child who had been told ghost stories took it for a ghost and began to shriek. But all the time it was the stump of a tree. We see the world as we are. Suppose there is a baby in a room with a bag of gold on the table and a thief comes and steals the gold. Would the baby know it was stolen? That which we have inside, we see outside. The baby has no thief inside and sees no thief outside. So with all knowledge.

Do not talk of the wickedness of the world and all its sins. Weep that you are bound to see wickedness yet. Weep that you are bound to see sin everywhere, and if you want to help the world do not condemn it. Do not weaken it more. For what is sin and what is misery, and what are all these but the results of weakness? The world is made weaker and weaker every day by such teachings. Men are taught from childhood that they are weak and sinners. Teach them that they are all glorious children of immortality, even those who are the weakest in manifestation. Let positive, strong, helpful thought enter into their brains from very childhood. Lay yourselves open to these thoughts and not to weakening and paralyzing ones. Say to your minds "I am He, I am He." Let it ring day and night in your minds like a song,

and at the point of death declare: "I am He." That is the Truth; the infinite strength of the world is yours. Drive out the superstition that has covered your minds. Let us be brave. Know the Truth and practise the Truth. The goal may be distant, but awake, arise, and stop not till the goal is reached.

HOLY HUMILITY

From "The Little Flowers of St. Francis"

Whenas Saint Francis on a time abode in the House of Porziuncula with Brother Masseo of Marignano, a man of much sanctity, discretion and grace in speaking of God, for the which cause Saint Francis loved him much: one day Saint Francis returning from the wood and from his prayers, and being at the entrance to the wood, the said Brother Masseo desired to make proof of his humility, and stood over against him, and as though mocking said: "Why after thee? why after thee? why after thee?" Replied Saint Francis: "What is this thou wouldst say?" Quoth Brother Masseo: "I say, why doth all the world come after thee, and why is it seen that all men long to see thee, and hear thee, and obey thee? Thou art not a man comely of form, thou art not of much wisdom, thou art not noble of birth: whence comes it then that it is after thee that the whole world doth run?"

Hearing this Saint Francis, all overjoyed in spirit, lifting up his face unto heaven, stood for a great while with his mind uplifted in God; anon returning to himself again, he knelt him down and rendered thanks and praises unto God; and then with great fervour of spirit turned him to Brother Masseo and said: "Wilt thou know why after me? wilt thou know why after me? wilt thou know why after me, that the whole world doth run? This cometh unto me from the eyes of the most high God, which behold at all time the evil and

the good: for those most holy eyes have seen among sinners none more vile, none more lacking, no greater sinner than am I: wherefore to do this marvellous work the which He purposeth to do, He hath not found upon the earth a creature more vile, and therefore hath He chosen me to confound the nobleness and the greatness and the strength and the beauty and wisdom of the world: to the intent that men may know that all virtue and all goodness come from Him, and not from the creature, and that no man may glory in himself; but whoso will glory, may glory in the Lord, unto whom is honour and glory for ever and ever."

Then Brother Masseo, at so humble a reply uttered with so great fervour, was afraid, and knew of a surety that Saint Francis was rooted and grounded in humility.

You can control nothing but your own mind. Even your two-year old babe may defy you by the instinctive force of its personality. But your own mind you can control. Your own mind is a sacred enclosure into which nothing harmful can enter except by your permission. Your own mind has the power to transmute every external phenomenon to its own purposes. If happiness arises from cheerfulness, kindliness, and rectitude (and who will deny it?), what possible combination of circumstances is going to make you unhappy so long as the machine remains in order? . . . "Look within." "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." "Oh, yes! you protest. "All that's old. Epictetus said that. Christ said that." They did. I admit it readily. But if you were ruffled this morning because your motor-omnibus broke down, and you had to take a cab, then so far as you are concerned these great teachers lived in vain. . . . And all because you have a sort of notion that a saying said two thousand years ago cannot be practical.—*Arnold Bennett.*

ANANDA ASHRAMA

In the early days of California, the Franciscan Missions which stretch like a chain along El Camino Real (The King's Highway) from San Diego in the south to Sonoma in the north, were not as they are now for the most part,—abandoned, silent and in ruins; they were centres of life and light and spiritual brightness. Father Junipero Serra, their saintly founder and head, placed them so that they were apart, each from the other, but one day's journey on foot, in order that those who travelled up and down the coast might never lack shelter at night.

Now it is said that Father Serra had in his mind a Mission which was never built, and this Mission, according to John Stephen McGroarty, famous modern chronicler of California and its Missions, was to have been constructed somewhere between San Gabriel and San Fernando. He has taken upon himself the building of this Mission and his choice of location has fallen upon the beautiful valley which holds in its cup the villages of La Crescenta, Sunland and Tujunga. But perhaps Father Junipero's dream has already found its embodiment. In the Sierra Madre mountains in the Valley of La Crescenta, Ananda Ashrama, dedicated to the Universal Spirit and founded "for the good of many and the happiness of many," is bringing to the California of to-day, the pure faith, the sense of surrender to God, the heroism and the indomitable spirit of consecration which flamed in the hearts of those ancient Franciscans. Why should it not be so? The vision of the holy is never lost and God cares nothing for creed or form.

Already in six months the benign influence of the Ashrama is being felt far and wide. To the casual observer, the location seems remote, yet during Swami Paramananda's visits there in the spring and in the late summer, Sunday after

Sunday motors climbed the long grade and people even walked in order to hear the Swami give his supreme message out under the open sky. The most distinguished and talented came and came again. And as a matter of fact Ananda Ashrama is remote from the world only in the spiritual sense. It is within less than an hour's ride of Pasadena, Glendale and Los Angeles.

Meanwhile the work of development goes quietly on. New roads have been built, opening up hitherto inaccessible parts of the property. Cabins have been constructed to house the ever-growing band of workers. Some years ago, a little boy with great love in his heart declared, "Swami, if ever I get rich I'll buy you a goat." That same little boy, now fifteen years of age, is a worker at the Ashrama and he brought with him nine goats, two cows, a donkey, and other live stock. Real devotion makes our words come true. As the rainy season approaches, out-of-door services may have to be abandoned, so already plans are being drawn for library and recreation-hall large enough to seat two or three hundred people, while the present building is to be enlarged for dwelling purposes. Later the main Temple will be built. There is to be an architectural committee composed of three of the most distinguished architects of California, each of whom is giving his skill and his time as an offering to the Ashrama. The young fruit trees on the place have yielded abundantly, large, finely flavored peaches, apricots, pears, walnuts. In truth the Ashrama is a blessed spot and must inevitably become a place of pilgrimage for the thousands who flock to California from all over the world.

The Swami who is now at the Boston Centre expects to return to the Ashrama in November. During his absence there will be no public Services, but the members of the Ashrama will be at home to visitors Sunday and Thursday afternoons.

REPORT

Swami Paramananda remained in Boston through the first two Sundays in July when he returned once more to Ananda Ashrama and the growing activities of the new work. During his absence the Sunday Services were ably conducted, as before, by Miss K. F. Sherwood. To her remarkably sympathetic understanding of the many vital world questions of our time, she brings her experience of fifteen years of devoted and active service in the work. This enables her to combine most constructively the ideals of the East and the West. The fundamental theme of the readings and addresses given was the essential and ever manifesting oneness of all apparent variety. Through the faithful co-operation and attendance of many, the summer proved fruitful and satisfactory.

The regular Tuesday night class was carried on as a study group under the charge of Miss Philadelpheus. Two evenings were devoted to the study of the life of Sri Ramakrishna —that humble God-intoxicated saint of modern India to whose surpassing love is due the new tide of divine mercy which is sweeping away the barriers of prejudice and making the West and the East common inheritors of the Truth which makes man free. Two more evenings were taken up with the life of the most universal and sublime of Christian saints— the Little Poor Man of Assisi. Besides these the writings of Swami Vivekananda and Swami Paramananda were chiefly studied as guides to the practical application of the teaching of Vedanta to daily life.

At the close of September the Boston Centre rejoiced once more in welcoming the return of its beloved founder and leader. With the first Sunday in October the Swami resumed his usual charge of the work. His long and frequent absences since the opening of the California work have only deepened in the hearts of many the appreciation of his message.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

NOVEMBER, 1923

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Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.
Published monthly except in August and September

Vol. XII NOVEMBER, 1923 No. 9

SECRET OF RIGHT ACTION

By Swami Paramananda

The secret of right action is in reality no secret at all. It does not lie in any formula which we repeat. There is no magic by means of which we can follow the path of idleness and yet make our life productive. No! The secret lies in our own motives, in our power of application. It is not the strong physical vehicle which makes the productive human being; it is skillfulness in action, knowing how to adjust ourselves quickly, how to perform a task with the least expenditure of energy. This is what gives immediate success. There are some people who talk little and accomplish more, while others talk much and accomplish nothing. Though a man may speak very glibly on religion, on the great ideals of love, service and brotherhood, that does not make him religious. But if he is "a doer of the law" as Christ said, even in a small measure; if he knows how to direct his life and its forces, he will not only be religious, he will be a better, stronger human being and his influence will reach others. This is what I call practical religion,—a religion productive of good, of men and women of an inspiring type,—and not the morbid religion which merely clings to dogma. Not that!

One of the most interesting studies in life is to note how our false concept can distort even a holy example so that it

no longer bears any resemblance to the original idea. For instance, the average man looks upon the world of religion as entirely apart from active life. He thinks that in order to become religious one must abandon worldly activities and assume a mournful repentant attitude. This is not a true concept of religion. What good will even the loftiest ideal do us or our fellow-men if we do not live it and bring it to fruition? Unless it gives us something definite and dynamic it might just as well not exist for us. The whole purpose of religion and philosophy is to give us that which is inspiring, elevating and constructive. Merely going to church or professing a creed, whether it be Christianity or Buddhism, or any other "ism," is not active religion. It is not practical religion. It is a mockery. It is degradation for the soul of the individual and for the soul of the race. It can only produce a lot of hypocrites and fanatics.

True religion we carry into our outer activities; we make it alive, alert and productive. If a person does nothing and gives nothing for the benefit of his fellows, how do we know he is religious? Merely upholding a theory is nothing. If we have high ideals we must express them in our lives. This problem confronts us all. Whether we are laymen or in religious life makes no difference whatsoever. We are living souls in contact with other souls; we have to be active. These are the ideals of Karma Yoga, the great Indian system of right action. It proclaims that religion is not merely for the man who is inactive. On the contrary it holds that the man who is active and energetic, who is constantly doing something in the world has just as much right to enter the Kingdom of Heaven as the hermit without duties and without obligations. It pays great tribute to the people who live in the world and carry their ideal intact. They are the heroes.

There is no one who can claim that he does not need to

take part in active life. Whether we spend our days at home or go out daily, we must be doing something for our self-preservation. A man who does nothing, his mind and his physical vehicle quickly deteriorate. He becomes dead although carrying on an existence. One who is so convinced of his own principle that he is indifferent to what others say, and who is willing to give himself to his task, that man will accomplish his purpose. Great artists know this, also scientists,—though perhaps unconsciously. They plunge into their work. There are moments when we forget our environment, forget everything but the one thing that we are doing, and those are the supreme moments of our life. They make it possible for us to attain success.

How does the average person work? He works with a sense of weight and drudgery or else with feverish intensity. Either will break him. One who works with indifference, how can he accomplish anything? His heart is not in it. His mind, his soul, his energies are all divided. If our heart is not in our task we shall resemble laborers who have no real interest in what they are doing; they only pretend. If they break things they do not care; they merely want their wage. Such work can never bring satisfaction to us or to any one and we learn nothing from it. When the aim is low it can only produce something very small and unsatisfying. On the other hand, a person who is driven by the fever of a selfish motive, who works with nervous excitement, how long will he last? Sooner or later he will break his machine.

What we need is the understanding spirit—the love element. By that I mean, we must learn to love the task we are performing. Any machine which does not receive sufficient lubrication will break because of friction very quickly, and it is the element of understanding, of love, which keeps our human machine in running order. No one can do his work

properly unless he has feeling. A person with cut and dried attitude may try to do his duty, but he will not be really productive. Many charitable organizations are like that. They are excellent institutions but they seem to be untouched by human feelings. It is not intended for human beings to destroy the finer part of their life and become like machines. We may direct a machine, we may use it, but we must have intelligence and feeling in abundance. It is not an arduous task to put these ideas and ideals into practice. What we now do with small, selfish mind we can do just as well with idealistic motive. It will refresh us. Instead of feeling crushed and broken down by our work, we shall be filled with energy, we shall know greater inspiration.

We have spoken of master artists, musicians and scientists, how through concentration and one-pointed love for their art, they attain their ideal. There is a point here. An ordinary person when he undertakes anything at once begins to think of the money he is going to get out of it, or some other return. It stands to reason that we cannot fill our mind with these calculations and imaginings and not weaken it for the task in hand. The logic is plain. Instead of doing his work with the wholeness of his being, he is dividing himself into many parts, is thinking of the non-essentials. Naturally his return will be very small. He has scattered his forces thereby wasting his time. Of course work done in this way, half-heartedly, with distracted mind, must be done badly and often has to be taken apart and done over again. Poor laborers turn out this sort of work, or sometimes shrewd people who think it will pass unnoticed. But there are others more shrewd and they find it out. This not only means lost labor, but it has a very demoralizing effect upon the laborer.

Action and reaction are constantly taking place in this world. No one can escape them. We may declare that we

are going to have in our life only happiness and beauty, that we will have riches and not poverty. But the pairs of opposites are always playing. We cannot have happiness without unhappiness. We cannot have light without darkness. What is the remedy? It is given in the Gita: "To work alone thou hast the right, but never to the fruits thereof." The man who is a slave to his passions, who is bound by small ideas of gain and loss, must suffer from reaction. Suppose we scheme and plan and then something goes wrong? We not only lose that which we have set our heart upon, but we no longer have the will or inclination to try again. The man of discerning mind, however, who understands the secret and is not attached to results, rises above a failure. He does better the next time and still better, till he finally succeeds. He gives no thought to the fruit. The fruit will come when we are deserving of it, and we make ourselves deserving by learning to throw our entire being into our acts. This is what makes us dynamic. Let the fruit alone for the time being. Do not be afraid that some one else will take it from you. No one can. What is your rightful heritage will be yours.

If it is a fact that you do not want to lose anything, physically, mentally, morally or spiritually, then do not play the losing game. Never think anything too small to do. The truly great do not discriminate between big tasks and little. Their keenness, their power of appreciation, their desire to do what they do well, makes them forget that a task is little. This is the true sign of greatness. Men of vision, of genius, never feel that any work is beneath them. There is nothing beneath us and nothing beyond us. That should be our attitude. By doing small tasks whole-heartedly with concentration and skillfulness, we evolve within ourselves a power which will enable us later on to perform some great task which now seems like a mountain, inaccessible and unobtain-

able. It will melt away before us when we know the secret, and this power of single-hearted devotion is the secret; it is a gift, an inspiration, subtle and noiseless. We cannot force it upon another mind. Each soul must evolve it. That which we evolve within, saturates our whole life. We may not be regarded as religious by our community, but that makes no difference. We carry a sustaining influence. When an emergency arises we know how to adjust ourselves quickly. We possess the power to do our work, no matter what its nature, and come out unsullied and unspoiled.

So do not imagine that religion means retiring from the world. That idea brought corruption among the great schools of philosophy and religion in the past. Disciples began to think that the religious life meant simply withdrawing and meditating. Meditation is a very active thing,—that is, true meditation. It means first seeing clearly, and then putting into practice what we see. Love is an abstract ideal if we lay it to one side, but the act of loving service,—filling the heart with love and expressing it through our life,—brings a dynamic return. Think what a tremendous benefit it would be to the world if all men who believed in Christ and His message of love would practise that love even in small measure. What a mighty thing it would be if the five hundred million people who profess Buddhism would follow the wonderful example of their compassionate teacher Gautama Buddha and practise non-killing,—not merely refraining from partaking of animal food, but never harming another by a hateful thought, actually practising non-injury in thought, word and deed. What an atmosphere would be created in this world! And that is what the world needs to-day.

The superiority of any religion or philosophy lies in its practical life and not in its theories or dogmas. Religions are not high or low because of these. Each religion has one

supreme pinnacle, but it is when we touch practical living that we bring to fruition all that these great ideals stand for. We go on with a sense of consecration, a sense of high duty. The nature of our work does not matter. It is not high office that ennobles a man, but his motive. We need not boast because of any position that we hold, or feel degraded because of lack of opportunities. Opportunities will come when we have proved our fitness. That is the law of compensation. There is an Indian parable of a rich man who employed two servants,—one, a talker, clever and convincing; the other, not so skilled in words, but industrious, always busy in the orchard producing things. One day the rich man came to visit the garden. The clever, shrewd servant began to praise his master's person, flattering him, telling him how beautiful were his hands and face and everything pertaining to his personality. The other servant said nothing; he went and gathered all the things that he had produced through his silent labor and placed them before his master. With whom do you suppose the master was pleased?

It is not the talker, the noisy, aggressive type of human being who produces the most or who brings the greatest amount of blessing. It is the quiet, concentrated worker. Although he asks nothing, he receives everything. Whether we care for the fruit or not, it will come to us when we deserve it. Let us carry that in our mind, in our consciousness. It will ennoble us; it will heal our wounds when we are disappointed. We are placed here by a divine hand. To disconnect ourselves from that, to feel and think that we are isolated and unprotected, existing merely for our own self-gratification, is the greatest tragedy that can befall us. To restore ourselves to that One is to rid the soul of selfish desires.

Let us have a great ideal, an ideal that will startle us at

first with its greatness. That is the only kind of an ideal to hold before our mind's eye and to work for. Little by little our imperfections and difficulties will vanish and instead of regarding life as a drudgery, instead of shrinking from it, we shall bless this life which offers so many opportunities; we shall find joy even in the little daily tasks and wherever we are placed we shall know happiness.

WORK AND RENUNCIATION

Dialogue between Buddha and a Householder

Anathapindika said: I see that thou art the Buddha, the Blessed One, the Tathagata, and I wish to open to thee my whole mind. Having listened to my words advise me what I shall do. My life is full of work, and having acquired great wealth, I am surrounded with cares. Yet I enjoy my work, and apply myself to it with all diligence. Many people are in my employ and depend upon the success of my enterprises. My heart yearns to do what is right and to be a blessing unto my fellows. Let me then ask thee, must I give up my wealth, my home, and my business enterprises, and like thyself go into homelessness in order to attain the bliss of a religious life?

And the Buddha replied: The bliss of a religious life is attainable by every one who walks in the noble eightfold path. He that cleaves to wealth had better cast it away than allow his heart to be poisoned by it; but he who does not cleave to wealth, and possessing riches, uses them rightly, will be a blessing unto his fellows. It is not life and wealth and power that enslave men, but the cleaving to life and wealth and power. The bhikkhu who retires from the world in order to lead a life of leisure will have no gain, for a life of indolence is an abomination, and lack of energy is to be despised.

The Dharma of the Tathagata does not require a man to

go into homelessness or to resign the world, unless he feels called upon to do so; but the Dharma of the Tathagata requires every man to free himself from the illusion of self, to cleanse his heart, to give up his thirst for pleasure and lead a life of righteousness. And whatever men do, whether they remain in the world as artisans, merchants, and officers of the king, or retire from the world and devote themselves to a life of religious meditation, let them put their whole heart into their task; let them be diligent and energetic, and if they are like the lotus, which although it grows in the water, yet remains untouched by the water, if they struggle in life without cherishing envy or hatred, if they live in the world not a life of self but a life of truth, then surely joy, peace, and bliss will dwell in their minds.

As the strength of the tree shows itself in the fruit, so the true divine strength in a man is shown in his good works and virtues. "There is no faith without works." Otherwise prayer is but a mockery and an outward form, and does not attain to the city of God. . . . God is well-pleased with everything that is not false, or contrary to the love of God and man. If one should carry stones into the sea to please his brother, he would be as well-pleasing to God as a preacher in the pulpit. For what work does God need? Just as the flowers of the field do not envy each other, although one may be more beautiful and comely than another, but live happily with each other and enjoy each the other's virtue, so do we all please God, who dwell in His will alone—we are all in the same garden.—*Jacob Behmen.*

It is the business of a musician to harmonize every instrument, but of a well-educated man to adapt himself harmoniously to every fortune.—*Demophilus.*

THE GIFT OF THANKFULNESS

By Sister Daya

True thanksgiving comes as a sense of wonder in the soul, felt only in those moments of profound humility when the heart stripped bare of all self-conceit and pride of power is conscious both and at once, of its own barrenness and of the glory which floods it. Prosperity, health, wealth, good fortune so-called, these gifts for which man so often gives his all, for which he kneels and says: "My Lord I thank Thee," seem in the face of the one supreme gift of God Himself like tinsel or glass in the face of the sun. To him who has experienced this moment of wonder, that which the world is pleased to term success is but the pity of the gods. The outer life of such a one may be limited on every side by pain, by hunger, by want, by misunderstanding, even by torture, but when that supreme moment comes of complete emptiness and complete fulness, that yielding of the finite to the Infinite, then the very soul overflows with thanksgiving. Just as Mary sang her Magnificat, so the heart, the little handmaid of God, gives thanks for the ineffable Light that has entered it. This is the true thanksgiving,—an eternal flow of love and gratitude, untouched by time or circumstance.

Outer fortune comes with the dawn and goes with the sunset; its very blessings are doubtful. Even while the soul, crowned by fame and adorned by wealth, is revelling in what it feels to be God's bounty, the real gifts of God are withdrawn,—the gifts of thankfulness, humility and vision. Blind to its loss, the soul reaches out ever more and more for that which is destroying it. It gives perfunctory thanks (if it gives thanks at all), self-conscious and calculating; but at bottom it takes everything as its right and its gratitude for favors received is balanced by its curse when favors are withdrawn. The world recognizes all this theoretically but continues to pray for "fool's gold."

The quality of our desires proclaims our spiritual status. Give me wealth and authority, prays the fool; serenity and peace, the love of children, the power of giving and of loving, supplicates the noble soul; "Anything or nothing" so that it be Thy Will; grant me only Thy blessed Presence, is the prayer of the truly illumined.

There was once a holy man whose life was so pure that God desired to bestow upon him some signal blessing. An angel messenger was sent to him and offered him fame, but he refused; wealth, he refused; wisdom, love,—the rarest gifts of God to man; but still he refused. "Surely there is something which God may bestow that you yearn for?" said the angel. "Name your own gift." "Let Him grant me," replied the holy man, "to be able to bless others endlessly without ever knowing that I am blessing." "So be it" said the angel. From that moment wherever that holy man's shadow passed, new life arose. If it touched the sick, they became well; the miserable, they became happy; the restless, they became full of peace; but the man went on his way all unconscious. No taint of vanity or ego tortured his soul or marred the purity of his gift; it flowed untainted from the hand of God, blessing the heart through which it passed to other hearts. In time even the man's name was lost and he became known as "The Holy Shadow."

Many may exclaim; the only joy in blessing is to know that we bless. We fail to realize that the moment the sense of "I do" enters, the power to bless withdraws. That is why the holy ask only for God and there lies the difference between goodness and holiness. The good desire power to bestow and they pray for the means to help their fellow-men. The holy know that there is only One who gives, only One who blesses; so with utter surrender they pray, "I do nothing; Thou doest all things. Possess me so utterly that there is naught left in

me that is not Thee. Not I, not I, O Lord, but Thou!" With most of us it may take many lives for this prayer to be granted. Ancient encrustations must be broken from the heart before it can expand sufficiently to receive God. But though we may not yet be able to experience the supreme wonder of gratitude, we can strive to "cover all things with the Lord." There is nothing in the world too dense or dark for His Face to shine through.

If discontent frets us then it is well indeed,—being young souls,—to remember even our outer blessings: the mother hands that held us, the milk that nurtured us, the very protecting influences which have kept us alive and given us vision enough to yearn. Every humble, grateful thought will fill the heart with sweetness and melt a little of its hardness. Gratitude can become worship and in worship, self is forgotten. There is no life that cannot count its blessings when it views destiny in this light, when it sees one little human existence as only a short act in the great drama of the soul. So many lovely things come to us from the Infinite Mother! Let us be truly grateful to Her. Let gratitude flow from our heart spontaneously just as it flows from the heart of the true artist for the gifts of light and shade, form and color, for the flash of a sunset in the dusk, or the bend of a flower in the dawn. In fact the great artist comes very close to covering everything with the Lord. Does he not reveal God in that which to the unseeing is merely dark or even sordid?

It is not what we receive but what we are able to gain from what we receive that constitutes the gift of God. One small gift may bring to the surrendered heart an ocean of blessing while the selfish, contracted heart may not be able to receive even a drop of blessing from an ocean of giving. We covet what another has, we see him surrounded by all that we lack, all that we long for; but if we, lacking all that,

can be possessed of a humble heart and the power of gratitude and he, possessed of all that, lacks in thankfulness and humility, then he has nothing and we have everything. Ingratitude and a complaining heart shut the doors of our soul against "the unasked, unceasing Giver." Then though He gives, we cannot take. His bounty is never lacking, but our power to receive is lacking. By our attitude we turn away beautiful things which are at our very threshold. We would dictate what He should give and how and when and where. Then when He bestows something far more precious in His own way and time, we reject it.

In our greed we barely begin to enjoy one gift before we are crying for another. We would always pluck the fruit before it is ripe. If we would be content to wait; if we would concern ourselves with our own fitness or unfitness to receive rather than with God's slowness to give, then the fruit of our yearning would come at the moment of ripeness and we should be prepared to draw from it the essence of its sweetness. God knows best what we need and when we need it. Nothing is blessed save that which comes from His own hand at His own time. Our concern, anyway, should not be over what we desire to receive, but over that which we long to give. The final divine gift is the power to give, not this or that, but our whole being,—mind, heart, soul, body, to the Supreme. If we have to grieve, let it not be a petty grieving over some favor withheld, but let it be a noble grief over our inability to lay our all at God's feet. Let us transform our longing for things into yearning for God. One is desire and the other is true prayer. When He enters the heart there will be need for no words, for no teaching. He is the only Teacher, the only Lord, the One Revealer. "To the knower of God all the Vedas are as of little use as a small water tank in flood time." We must give all to receive all. "God says pay for

it and take it" writes Emerson. It is true. We pay for everything in some coin or other. If we take unrealities, then we must pay for them in the coin of realities; but if we take realities we pay for them in the coin of the unreal. We give the finite and receive the Infinite.

We can allow our minds to dwell on anything, on our lack or on our fulness; on what has been denied us or on what has been granted. How can we be unhappy or fretful if we are constantly thinking of God's Presence in our heart and His blessing in our life? He who has an ungrateful demanding heart will never know either satisfaction or peace, but will be driven whipped from one unfulfilled desire to another. Let us never take anything as our right. To what have we an especial right? Every little thing that comes to us, let it be to us as a divine surprise. Then will some passing kindness glow with the freshness of a young flower and God will smile at us from every pair of smiling eyes.

Shall we be grateful for pain? Swami Vivekananda once said that until we can receive pain as the kiss of the Divine Mother we shall never know Spirit in Its wholeness. There is a marvelous litany from the Sanskrit which gives the key to true thanksgiving. If we say it from our hearts, its great meaning will be unveiled little by little and we shall be overwhelmed with gratefulness for the enfolding presence of the Supreme. It sings the worship of the One Infinite Mother in and through all things,—in hunger, in thirst, in peace, in power, in faith, in compassion, in beauty and even in mistakes. Nothing is excluded and there is this final promise, "He who takes shelter at Thy Feet never meets with any danger but becomes the shelter for other souls."

Let us then take shelter at Her Feet. Let us have intimate and tender communion with Her in every event of life. She will reach us through a thousand channels, blessing, guid-

ing, disciplining. Let us offer every task, even the meanest and most trying, to Her, for it is She Who has given it to us to do. Above all, let us feel Her as real, Reality Itself, the close Companion of the heart, the Essence of all love, all comradeship, ever present,—a Being that we can feel and hear and see once we learn to use the senses of the soul. In the Infinite lies all power even the power to make Itself known to the finite. If we can even long to do this; if we even have the power of yearning for the divine Presence, then there will come to our hearts the marvel of thanksgiving and then although we may be cast into the streets, naked and starving, we shall feel ourselves richer than the richest king, blessed as only the little ones of God are blessed.

VIRTUE OF SINGLE INTENTION

By John Ruysbroeck

Mark how, in each of our works we shall go out to meet God and shall increase our likeness unto Him, and shall more nobly possess the fruitive unity. By every good work, how small soever it be, which is directed to God with love and with an upright and single intention, we earn a greater likeness, and eternal life in God. A single intention draws together the scattered powers into the unity of spirit and joins the spirit to God. A single intention is end, and beginning, and adornment, of all virtues. A single intention offers to God praise and honour and all virtues: and it pierces and passes through itself and all the heavens and all things, and finds God within the simple ground of its own being.

That intention is single which aims only at God and in all things only at their connection with God. The single intention casts out hypocrisy and duplicity, and a man must possess it and practise it in all his works above all other things; for it is this which keeps man in the presence of God, clear in under-

standing, diligent in virtue, and free from outward fear, both now and in the day of doom. Singleness of intention is the inward, enlightened, and loving tendency of the spirit; it is the foundation of all ghostliness; it includes in itself faith, hope and charity, for it trusts in God and is faithful to Him. It casts nature underfoot, it establishes peace, it drives out ghostly discontent, and preserves fullness of life in all the virtues. And it gives peace and hope and boldness toward God, both now and in the day of doom.

Thus we shall dwell in the unity of the spirit, in grace and in likeness; and shall always go out to meet God by means of the virtues, and offer up to Him with a simple intention our whole life and all our works; and thus in every work, and ever more and more, we shall increase our likeness. And thus we rise up out of the ground of our single intention and pass through ourselves and go out to meet God without means, and rest in Him in the abyss of simplicity: there we possess that heritage which has been prepared for us from all eternity. All ghostly life and all works of virtue consist in the divine likeness and in the singleness of intention; and all their supreme rest consists in simplicity above all likeness. Nevertheless, one spirit surpasses another in virtue and in likeness, and each possesses its own proper being in itself, according to the degree of its nobleness. And God suffices each one in particular, and each one, according to the measure of his love, seeks God in the ground of his spirit; both here and in eternity.

We cannot say that God is gracious because He feeds us, for every father is bound to supply his children with food; but when He keeps us from going astray and holds us back from temptations, then He is truly gracious.

—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

DESTINY NOT A MATTER OF CHANCE

Selection from the Mahabharata

Draupadi said: It seemeth, O Yudhishthira, that creatures derive the character of their lives from their acts of former lives. Amongst mobile creatures man differeth in this respect that he aspireth to affect his course of life in this and the other world by means of his acts. Impelled by the inspiration of a former life, all creatures visibly reap in this world the fruits of their acts. Indeed, all creatures live according to the inspiration of a former life. Cover thyself up with action as with an armour. There may or may not be even one in a thousand who truly knoweth the utility of acts or work. All the creatures in the world would have been exterminated, if there were no action.

Those persons in the world who believe in destiny, and those again who believe in chance, are both the worst among men. Those only that believe in the efficacy of acts are laudable. He that lieth at ease, without activity, believing in destiny alone, is soon destroyed like an unburnt earthen pot in water. So also he that believeth in chance, sitteth inactive though capable of activity, liveth not long, for his life is one of weakness and helplessness. If any person accidentally acquireth any wealth, it is said he deriveth it from chance, for no one's effort hath brought about the result. And, O son of Pritha, whatever of good fortune a person obtaineth in consequence of religious rites, that is called providential. The fruit, however, that person obtaineth by acting himself, and which is the direct result of those acts of his, is regarded as proof of personal ability.

Some say that everything is the result of chance; others that everything is the result of providential dispensation; others again, that this is not so, but that everything which is supposed to be the result of destiny or chance is the result of

the good or the bad acts of former lives. It is seen that possessions are obtained from chance as also from destiny. Something being from destiny and something from chance, something is obtained by exertion. That person that doth not act, certainly succumbeth, O Yudhishthira. The man of action in this world generally meeteth with success. The idle, however, never achieve success. If success becometh impossible, then should one seek to remove the difficulties that bar his way to success. And, O king, if a person worketh hard his debt to the gods is cancelled whether he achieveth success or not. The person that is idle and lieth at his length, is overcome by adversity; while he that is active and skillful is sure to reap success and enjoy prosperity.

The acts of others, it is seen, are crowned with success. It is probable that ours also will be successful. How can one know beforehand what the consequence will be? Having exerted thyself, thou wilt know what the fruit of thy exertions will be. The tiller tilleth with the plough the soil and soweth the seeds thereon. He then sitteth silent for the clouds after that are the cause that would help the seeds to grow into plants. If, however, the clouds favor him not, the tiller is absolved from all blame. He sayeth unto himself,—What others do I have done. If, notwithstanding this, I meet with failure, no blame can attach to me. Thinking so, he containeth himself and never indulgeth in self-reproach. O Bharata, no one should despair, saying,—Oh, I am acting, yet success is not mine! For there are two other causes, besides exertion, towards success. Whether there be success or failure, there should be no despair, for success in acts dependeth upon union of many circumstances. No man should ever disparage himself, for the man that disparageth himself never earneth high prosperity. O Bharata, success in this world is attainable on such conditions! In fact, success in the world is said to de-

pend on acting according to time and circumstances. My father formerly kept a learned Brahmana with him, he said all this unto my father. And, O Yudhishthira, while at intervals of business, I went out of the inner apartments and sat on the lap of my father, that learned Brahmana used to recite unto me these truths, sweetly consoling me therewith.

Thus ends the thirty-second section of the Arjunabhigamana of the Vana Parva.

OUR LADY'S TROUBADOUR

A Mary-Legend

Near Roc Amadour, in the country of France, lived one, Pierre de Syglar, a minstrel, who in all the world knew nothing but to play upon his viol. Being of courteous heart, he loved to pleasure gentle ladies with lai and rondel; but above all, his delight it was to laud and honour Her Who is Queen of all ladies,—Mary the Blessed.

There came a day, when to Her church at Roc Amadour, he went on pilgrimage in company with others. There were pilgrims young and pilgrims old, artisans, labourers, craftsmen skilled as well as those who ate the fruit of idleness. All went for the salvation of their souls and all went empty-handed, save only Pierre, who carried underneath his arm, his viol, for he loved it overdearly. Now in the shrine of Our Lady candles shone and votive offerings glistened. Pierre watched the pilgrims as they entered there and knelt before Her feet. Always they asked of Her somewhat, always they prayed, imploring this or that, and She smiled on them always from above the flickering lights. So gracious is Our Lady! Then Pierre timidly approached and made his orisons.

"Blessed Mother of God, dear Madame," so he prayed, "Meseemeth many come here to beg of Thee; but scarce one cometh here to give. Many supplicate Thy help and comfort;

yet who thinks to service Thee in aught? I am only a poor troubadour; but if Thou wilt deign to listen, my very great joy will be to entertain Thee with sweet music, to laud Thee with voice and viol as every loyal troubadour should laud the Mother of his King. Most sweet and holy Lady, I implore Thee to listen; for know, that if this be too poor for Thy acceptance, then in no wise can I serve Thee, since in the making of melody is my only skill."

Then very softly Pierre began to play in honour of his Queen. The sound at first was like an angel's breath, but ever as he drew his bow across the strings, the music swelled and throbbed until it flamed like to the seraphim and all the space within the silent church was filled with heavenly strains, while folk drew nigh to hear Our Lady's troubadour. Following this, he sang to Her (as was his wont with other ladies, and the which pleased them much) of battles and of heroes slain, of lovely fair in tears above their dead of happy chance and bright adventuring. And as the music died away he flung himself before Her smiling image and humbly asked of Her a gueridon,—one little boon; a candle from the many at Her feet, since ladies all reward their troubadours. Then, it is written, by angelic hands, Mary the Mother sent a candle down to rest upon Pierre's viol, the fairest and the tallest of them all, the one that burned immediately before Her.

But since the shrine was very rich in treasure, an abbey stood there keeping guard. A harsh and witless man he was, dry and barren of all favour. "Wicked enchanter!" cried he in a rage, "This is vile magic and a desecration!" And he did fall on Pierre and took from him the candle, placing it once more at Mary's feet. But the jongleur, nowise moved, silently thanking Her, took up his viol anew and sang with such high heart that the song staid not on earth at all but went beyond to where the angels are. For what cared he for wrath of man

now that he had Our Lady's grace? And Mary heard and once again She sent Her light and once again the sacristan with cruel hands did cudgel Pierre and take it from him. But when in quietness he went on playing with such high fervour that the tears did roll adown his cheeks and fall upon his viol, the third time Mary caused the candle to descend to Pierre, Her troubadour. Then did the bells ring out and all the countryside gave thanks for such a blessed miracle.

Upon the following day, Pierre came again and offered at Our Lady's shrine the candle wherewith She had paid his songs. Nor did he ever fail in his devotion. Through all his life, no matter whom his songs might praise, they silently were offered unto Her Who had so graciously received his gift, and always on that day at each new year, he laid before Her feet, within the chapel of Roc Amadour, a candle made of virgin wax and a full pound in weight. So may we all, with humble heart, offer unto God our only skill, nowise ashamed though it seem small and mean, for He will make it sweet and glorious.

When thou makest a dinner, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor the rich neighbors, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed. For they cannot recompense thee, for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.—*Jesus the Christ.*

Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest as oblation, whatever thou givest and the austerities thou performest, do that as an offering to Me. Thus thou shalt be freed from the bonds of action.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

NEW POEMS

By Swami Paramananda

Rendered into English from the Original Bengali.

I

Suddenly, meteor-like, there hath risen
a glory in the sky of my heart!
Blissful of form, effulgent, beneficent, gentle!
Embodiment of music and song,
Radiant with heavenly smile,
It hath awakened in my soul great memories.

Hail to Thee, Thou Goddess of Inspiration!
Holy art Thou! Forever adored!
Thou art the very foundation of life!
Whatsoever thought ariseth
In the kingdom of our mind,
Be it gross or be it subtle,
Never is it veiled from Thee.

Power have I none to worship Thee;
But if Thou, manifesting Thy compassion,
bestowest upon me Love,
Then, through the strength of Thy gift,
A current strong as the great river Sindhu
Will well up in the inmost recess of my heart.
Bathing in that sacred flow,
Men and women will be sanctified;
Drinking of its holy water,
Their mind and heart will be soothed and sated.

Thou Source of all might! Thou Soul of music!
If Thou wilt but enter my heart as Inspiration
Then will I be blessed, singing Thy eternal song.

II

Thy sleep is over,—arise, O India!
Thy dark night has ended at last, O Mother!
Listen with attentive ear!
The voice of new dawn is calling thee with sweet and gentle tone.
Doubt Her call no longer:
It is the Voice of God.
O India, open thine eyes and behold!
With what tender affection the rays of the morning sun kiss thy brow!
This, O Mother, is thy most auspicious day!
With uplifted heart and bowed head,
Receive the blessings the gods are bestowing upon thee.

COMMENTS ON BENGALI POEMS

By P. Guha Thakurta, B. A.

Here are two of Swami Paramananda's most recent poems, translated from original Bengali. Two most remarkable facts have to be remembered in connection with this new phase of Swami's poetry. He has written nothing in his own native language for these last seventeen years of his stay in America, and prior to his coming to the Occident he spent five years in Madras. Thus Swami has been practically out of touch with Bengali language and literature in original for this long time. All his literary work has hitherto been written in English, yet these new Bengali poems have come, as all poetry comes to him—spontaneous and free. It would be an impossible task to convey through these translations the poetic grandeur or the musical roll of the original verses, not to speak of their superb rhythmic variety and the characteristic tone-quality; yet we could at least render unto our readers the great and noble message which these poems inspire.

Most of these poems were written at his new Peace Re-

treat—Ananda Ashrama in California. Though each poem varies in theme and form, all of them suggest a new awakening in Swami's Oriental memories. Swami's new home in California is characteristically Oriental in atmosphere and surroundings. Maybe the silence that is in the open sky or the deep that is among the lovely hills has revived in the poet the grand images of the Orient. But to Swami, above all, his poetry is his soul's outpouring, expressing itself this time only in a different language and form.

REPORT

In India every autumn there is celebrated a very great religious Feast, known as The Feast of the Divine Mother or *Durga Puja.* At that time, according to popular belief, the Infinite Mother comes down for three days and dwells with Her children. It is an occasion of profound joy and feasting. Gifts are exchanged and on the final day even enemies embrace and forgive. In honor of this Feast, Swami Paramananda held an informal reception at the Vedanta Centre of Boston on the evening of October 19th. Every one entered into the spirit of the occasion so that a peculiarly happy and loving atmosphere was created. Miss Florence Colby gave very real pleasure with her cello. Mr. Das Gupta, organizer of the Union of East and West, spoke on the Indian village theatre. At Swami Paramananda's request Sister Daya gave a description of Ananda Ashrama, which the Swami crowned with a vivid account of incidents relative to its acquiring and upbuilding. The question of the evening was, who wrote the verses about King Tut? Miss Sherwood read them, but disclaimed authorship. Perhaps she dropped a hint when she said, "A little nonsense now and then is relished by the wisest men." This revealed to many Swami's humorous aspect and provided ample amusement. Before the guests went home they were given a folder upon which was printed the Poem "Divine Mother Heart," which appeared in the October Message. It was Swami's *Durga Puja* gift to his guests and gave in his own illumined words the spiritual import of the celebration.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

DECEMBER, 1923

CHRIST AND CHRIST-MASS

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Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.
Published monthly except in August and September

Vol. XII DECEMBER, 1923 No. 10

PURE SPIRIT

WHEN the pure Spirit shines
who sees it?
Few, yea, only a very few!
For not many have the
seeing eye.
Many see the light of the sun, the moon,
the far-distant stars
And the light of the road-side lamp;
But only the pure heart with the eye of
love
Can see the light that shineth from pure
Spirit.

SELFLESS-HEART

YE WHO love and serve
without thought of
self, are blessed.
Ye who give your all and
seek no gain,
Are blessed again and evermore.
For what shrine more holy than the self-
less heart?
What offering richer than the gift that
asketh no return?

—*Swami Paramananda.*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

No decrying of other sects—no depreciation of others without cause, but on the contrary a rendering of honour to other sects for whatever cause honour is due. By so doing, both one's own sect will be helped forward, and other sects benefitted. By acting otherwise, one's own sect will be destroyed in injuring others.—*Rock Inscriptions of Asoka.*

The very thing which now is called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, nor was it absent in the beginning of the human race before Christ came into the flesh, since when the true religion which already existed, began to be called Christian.—*St. Augustine.*

By diverse creeds we worship, thou and I:
The ear of One alone receives our prayer.
Each turns his face in longing toward the sky
To see his secret soul reflected there.
—*Popular Hindu Saying.*

He that is praised is in fact only One. In this respect all religions are only one religion. Because all praises are directed towards God's Light, these various forms and figures are borrowed from it.—*Jalalud-Din-Rumi.*

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.—*Jesus the Christ.*

With pure heart and fulness of love, I will do towards others what I do for myself.—*Teachings of Buddha.*

O Arjuna, he who looks upon pleasure and pain everywhere with the same regard as when it is applied to himself, that Yogi is highly esteemed.—*Sri Krishna.*

Those who worship the Merciful One are they who walk on the earth gently, and who, when fools speak to them, say "Peace."—*Koran.*

Love thy neighbor and suffer the little offences he may give thee.—*Thales of Miletus.*

The awakened man goes not on revenge, but rewards with kindness the very being who has injured him, as the sandal tree scents the axe of the woodman who fells it.

—*Sayings of Buddha.*

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.—*Jesus the Christ.*

The light which resides in the sun, in the moon, in fire, and which illumines the whole world, know that light to be Mine.—*Sri Krishna.*

All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life and the life was the light of men.—*St. John.*

I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

—*Jesus the Christ.*

I am Yesterday, To-day and To-morrow, for I am born again and again; mine is the unseen Force which createth the gods and giveth food to those in the Tuat.

—*Egyptian Book of the Dead.*

O Arjuna, I am the Self existing in the heart of all beings. I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of beings.—*Sri Krishna.*

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.—*Revelation.*

That Purusha (Spirit), of the size of a thumb, is like a light without smoke, lord of the past and the future. He is the same to-day and to-morrow.—*Katha-Upanishad.*

SONG OF THE SOUL

By Swami Paramananda

(Address delivered on Christmas Eve, 1922)

There are moments when the soul sings and these are very precious moments. The soul only sings when it has found its real joy. The significance of Christmas or of similar Feasts, in all countries and among all nations, is the song of the soul, when the Spirit rejoices, when it sings aloud with a sense of triumph. Why? Because in the world of gloom and despair it suddenly realizes its divine heritage,—a spark, a light comes from the darkness, revealing all things, redeeming all things and making us feel our own true worth. That, to me, is the real meaning of Christmas, the real meaning of the birth of any great Saviour: it is to give man a new sense of his own spiritual birth.

We never understand the true life of a Saviour or of any saint or holy personage until we enter into that spirit, and it is not outer feasting that enables us to do so, or even a great show of charity. In cultivating the true Christmas spirit, more is needed than mere outer ostentation. To make it complete, to make it real, there must be the inner awakening. Christmas stands for more than just the birth of the physical Christ-child. It symbolizes the Christ Spirit born anew in our hearts,—the love, the light, the redeeming power, transcending all material bondage. When we experience that, or when we even try to experience it through similar thoughts, feelings and ideas, then we taste bliss, then our soul truly sings. That is the song which brings real joy.

At first perhaps, we are unable to grasp the import of this, but the meaning is that wherever there is infinite Bliss, there is no room for heaviness, heartache or any unhappiness, and whenever that spirit is born in our midst, is manifested in our midst, it removes all sorrow. Then the sorrowing world

can truly smile, not with any sense of fickleness, but with a sense of security, of peace. However much a man may try to be fearless, when he is in the dark he trembles, he fears, he hesitates, in spite of all his logic and intellectual ideas; but he never can have hesitancy or fear or doubt when he is face to face with light. The light reveals, not only the things that are surrounding him, it reveals his own true worth, it gives him new strength, a new consciousness, and that is what I mean by the Christ Spirit being born anew within us. The man—the human, struggling, blundering man—feels for the first time that he has a part in higher things, that he does not need to depreciate himself, to think, "Oh well, I cannot do anything," "I have no power to redeem myself." On the contrary he feels that the redeeming power is already there in his own soul.

Now a Saviour does this for us. Yet we often hold such a One aloof, distant. We think it is enough if we bow before the altar and offer our worship. It is not enough. My concept of spiritual life is to have intimate relationship with our Ideal, just as a child has intimacy with his mother or father. He does not fear. He goes to them in his moments of despair and also in his moments of exaltation. All things he shares with them, and that is what we do when we understand spiritual feasts. We share all things, there is nothing to hide. Who will hide from the beneficent Spirit? When we know that One Who gives all blessings, then we shall not be reluctant to take those blessings. We shall not be afraid, because we shall know that there is an infinite Source from which we can draw. We cannot exhaust it. When we have that realization of an inexhaustible supply before us, above us, below us, then will come a sense of joyousness, a sense of relief. A spiritual avenue will open before us; the spirit of divinity will be born within us. Unless it is born within we

shall never know what it means to come in contact with our higher resources. We may fast, we may pretend religion, we may practise its outer forms with ostentation, but it will give us nothing real, nor shall we be able to convey anything real to any one else.

It is the inner life that we must have, the spirit of joy that comes from within,—the song of the soul, and Christmas, transcending all gloom and sadness and sorrow, forgetting all bitterness, is that Spirit. Through it we rise above materiality with renewed spirituality. That is the birth of Christ,—the birth of any Saviour. He is born anew and will continue to be born anew. One who lives in the turmoil of worldly concerns never seems to understand that access to that Spirit cannot be gained merely by belonging to a church or creed. It is by being born within one's self. People regard spiritual life as being full of mythical sayings. But they are not mythical, they are real. We are born again. The man of flesh who grieves, who sorrows, who blunders and who struggles, suddenly realizes that he has another Self which neither blunders nor grieves. That is the spiritual birth. A Saviour gives it. He tries to bring to us that glowing spiritual exaltation which transcends all things, not only when everything is going the way we want it to go, but even when everything is going against us.

The real glory of the Spirit is found within and when we have found it within, when it is born within us as reality, then we feel safe, then we realize the significance of Christmas. You can give a very great gift to your friends, to all people with whom you come in contact if you have kindled that spark within yourself, that hope, that courage, that something which lifts us above all material conditions. Then you have the real gift and a gift that is unbounded. It is not limited to the Christmas season. It redeems at all seasons. It has a very

beneficent power. By looking at your face a person may be inspired with new faith and resolution.

Christmas comes to remind us how we should love and how we should forgive, how we should be even willing to die this material death so that the Spirit may triumph, and the Spirit always triumphs and will always triumph if we only allow it to do so. If we are able to put aside our hide-bound ideas and materialistic notions, then the Spirit will be victorious and in that victory we shall rejoice and the soul will sing freely its blissful song.

Let us unite our thoughts and prayers so that we may have a sense of the spiritual Presence. Let us remember that the only rest we can create for our divine Guest, is our quietude, our peace, our serenity of soul. Let us in silence lift our hearts so that we may all find our peace in that infinite and unbounded One—the Giver of all blessings, the Embodiment of all blessedness, the Basis of our life and strength—our Source and Sustenance.

PAWNEE INDIAN HYMN

Ha, many things have the stars to tell us,
the morning star, the evening star,
Many things have the constellations to tell
us, all about the heaven.
But Chakaa, (the stars), they would guide
us all aright,
They would teach the people how we may cleave
one to another in the heavenly places,
Having one mind alone to mount into the still-
ness of the night and shine.
Wherefore, we sing this song, made for his
people by the wayfarer
Whom their leader visited in dream and saved;

Yea, hearken, we sing it circling solemnly
four times about the holy lodge:—
"They come to us, they rise, behold!
Over the marge of Mother Earth
Into Father Sky, they rise, they rise,
Chakaa the silent brethren!
Ah 'tis a blessed thing to behold them yonder
More blessed yet for us to mount with them,
To shine together each in his place as they!
They come to us, they rise,
We come to them, we rise,
We as Chakaa mount on high!
Behold them coming, climbing,
And we as they
Brethren in unity together."

* * * *

Such holy things and many more the stars
would tell us all,
Us the children of the Heavenly One, our Father:
How we should stand each in his place, and move
together forward with his fellows:
How we should dwell among men as Father Sky
doth brood over Mother Earth,
How we should leap invisibly, in spirit only,
full of the heavenly gladness,
How we should hang as the sign of God and lift up
the eyes and the hearts of men
Till they may become one soul in a shared hunger
for the Heavenly One,
Who verily set his token for them even whence
he doth send down
His breath to be their life, his stillness their awe,
his love for them—their joy.

CHRIST-MASS

By Sister Daya

Will it take from the tender and holy joy of Christmas-tide, to know that the same day which we of the West hold sacred as the birthday of the infant Saviour, had for the peoples of the past an almost identical significance? The 25th of December was not originally the day upon which the Christ Mass was celebrated. Not only the natal day of the Christ but the natal year is most uncertain. Both can be inferred only from texts which do not always agree. The year has been set back as far as the third century B.C., and forward to 10 A.D. As for the day, it was not till the fifth century that the 25th of December was definitely chosen. Up to that time various dates had been observed, ranging from the 3rd of January to the 20th of May. The reason for the final choice may sound strange to Christian ears. December 25th was fixed upon by the early church as the birthday of Christ Jesus, because that day was already set aside as a great festal occasion by almost the entire pagan world.

On the first moment after midnight, December 24th, practically all nations solemnized the birth of the sun at the winter solstice. Yet it was more than an astronomical observance. There seems ever to have been an intimate connection between the world's religions and the solar myths. The lives of the divine heroes and Saviours bear close resemblance, not only to each other, but to the sun's course in space. Thus Mithraism, young Christianity's most formidable rival, established the worship of Mithras as *Sol Invictus* or the Invincible Sun, Spirit of Truth and Light, "Mediator" between humanity and God. His birth within a cave was celebrated yearly on December 25th, not only in Persia and other parts of Asia Minor, but throughout pagan Europe.

It was a great holy day in ancient Rome when was observed

the festival of Sol the Invincible. There were games at the circus and universal rejoicing. "All public business was suspended, declarations of war and criminal executions were postponed, friends made presents to one another, and the slaves were indulged in great liberties." Mr. Gibbon in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" states, "The Roman Christians, ignorant of the real date of His (Christ's) birth, fixed the solemn festival to the 25th of December, the *Brumalia* or winter solstice, when the pagans annually celebrated the birth of Sol." St. Chrysostom (390 A.D.) refers to it: "On this day also, the birth of Christ was lately fixed at Rome, in order that whilst the heathen were busy with their profane ceremonies, the Christians might perform their holy rites undisturbed."

As a matter of fact, the Christian rites in themselves both in purpose and observance, seem closely akin to these "profane ceremonies." From what source do we inherit the Yule-fire, the Christmas-tree, the garlands and greens? There is nothing in the Christ story to account for them. But when we turn to the north we find the Yule-feast being celebrated by the ancient Germans with great rejoicing and good-will at the time of the winter solstice. The same date in Scandinavia marked the greatest festival of the year. The night of its observance was known as the "Mother-night" in commemoration of the birth of Freyr, son of the supreme god Odin and the goddess Frigga. From these northern peoples we derive our remnants of nature worship. Godfrey Higgins writes concerning the Druidic festival on December 25th: "The Druids kept this night as a great festival, and called the day following it Nolagh or Noel, or the day of regeneration, and celebrated it with great fires on the tops of their mountains, which they repeated on the day of the Epiphany or Twelfth Night." The mistletoe and the Christmas-tree are

our heritage from the Druids. France still calls Christmas Noel.

Even in the Far East the close of December is marked by religious solemnities and cessation of business activities. Centuries before Christ the Egyptians depicted the god Horus,—the "Saviour," the "Lord of Life," the "Only-Begotten,"—as a little child in the arms of his Virgin Mother, Isis: "Queen of Heaven" as she was called. His birth was likewise coincident with the winter solstice or the 25th of December, and effigies were shown of him lying in a manger, like the infant Jesus. An ancient Christian work, the "Chronicles of Alexandria," says: "Watch how Egypt has constructed the childbirth of a Virgin and the birth of her son, who was exposed in a crib to the adoration of the people." Among the Greeks, Bacchus, Adonis and Hercules were all born at the time of the winter solstice. Bacchus was always called a Saviour and was said to have been born of a virgin.

Do these facts detract in any way from the Christian story? Do they not rather enrich it by linking it with the aspirations and religious ideals of the races of men who had gone before? What greater symbol of light and life could man have than the sun? It was natural for him to identify its birth in December with the birth of Prophet or Teacher coming as the Sun of Righteousness to a darkened world. Why should not the life of a God-man, symbol of divine Light, parallel the course of the sun in the heavens, symbol of material light? The stars swing in obedience to the same Law which swings our lives. Does it not make God seem very close to us? After all, may not the association of the birthdays of Saviours with the birthday of the sun be but an eternal promise to man that as dawn follows night day after day, as spring follows winter year after year, even so and as unfailingly will the Eternal One manifest Himself from age to age "for the pro-

tection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers and for the re-establishment of virtue and religion upon earth."

What has the Christianity of Christ to fear from any Higher Criticism? Nothing can detract from the glory of that Life. It stands because it is true, because it is beautiful, because it is a divine expression of the deepest aspirations of the human soul. Relate it to Egypt or India, to Buddha, Krishna or Horus and still it stands, because its strength is eternal, is not dependent on historical facts but on spiritual realities. Even if the Man of Nazareth were proved to be a myth, Christ would yet live! If His Teachings were found to be but borrowings from the past, the Sermon on the Mount would remain the living voice of realization, more glorious because of the testimony of time.

There is but one Christ-life lived over and over again,—the life of selfless love, suffering and surrender. He who takes his stand on that will find all great faiths his own, all aspiring souls his kin, and will see in all Christs the One Christ —the One Krishna—the One Buddha: that eternal, unchanging Redeemer Whom no man in any age calls upon in vain.

Once a dispute arose in the court of the Maharajah of Burdwan among the learned men there as to who was the greater Deity, Shiva or Vishnu. Some gave preference to Shiva, others to Vishnu. When the dispute grew hot a wise pandit remarked, addressing the Raja, "Sire, I have neither met Shiva nor seen Vishnu; how can I say who is the greater of the two?" At this the dispute stopped, for none of the disputants really had seen the Deity. Similarly none should compare one Deity with another. When a man has really seen a Deity, he comes to know that all the Deities are manifestations of one and the same Brahman.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF

By Katharine F. Sherwood

We read in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, 19th Chapter, verses 16 to 22, "And behold one came and said unto him, 'Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' And he said unto him, 'Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God; but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.' He said unto him 'Which?' Jesus said: 'Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not bear false witness, honor thy father and thy mother and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'" And again in a later chapter a lawyer asks him: "Which is the great commandment in the law?" and Jesus answers quoting from the Scriptures, Deuteronomy 6:5—"'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might.' This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself'," from Leviticus 19:18.

This same story is given in the Gospel according to St. Luke, but with the account of the good Samaritan added. In this one the lawyer asks: "And who is my neighbor?" and Jesus tells him the story of the man who on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among thieves who robbed him and stripped him of his raiment and left him half dead. A priest came and passed him by, likewise a Levite, but a certain Samaritan came that way and had compassion on him, bound up his wounds, took him with him, brought him to an inn and took care of him and on the morrow when he departed left money for the care of him. "Which now of these three" Jesus said, "thinkest thou was neighbor unto him that fell among thieves?" And the lawyer said, "He that showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said unto him, "Go and do likewise."

The fact that it was a man of Samaria who did this makes the story all the more powerful for the Samaritans were looked down upon by the Jews because there were no Jews in Samaria any more and that idea of superiority was so strong. We are accustomed to this saying and it is always quoted as an utterance of Jesus the Christ, and so it was, but he quoted it from the Jewish Scriptures as was his wont, to give that authority from the law and the prophets, knowing well that this would the more impress the Jewish mind. We come to this teaching again in the writings of St. Paul. In a letter to the Romans he says: "Owe no man anything but to love one another, for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this: Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness (against thy neighbor), thou shalt not covet and if there be any other commandment it is briefly comprehended in these words: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." And again writing to the Galatians he says: "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

Once more in the Epistle of James, the brother of Jesus, we read, "If ye fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself' ye do well," and in that great letter to the Hebrews (it brings it closer to us to call it a letter) we read: "Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body."

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the

prophets." Matthew 7:12. All is summed up in that simple golden rule, to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us. If it were possible to do this we need have no deep philosophy, no laws, no government. It would be the fulfilling of the law. Why do we find it so difficult, this loving our neighbor as ourself? Who can do it? Who tries to do it? The Christian teaching has followed the same line as the Jewish and has given us directions with no explanations. It is still the law without explanation and we must go farther back in order to get that explanation which will give us the understanding necessary for an acceptance of the law. It is not enough for us to be told to love our neighbor as ourself. But when we come to know another teaching which says that our neighbor *is* ourself we begin to see that it is not only a direction to follow blindly, but it is a necessity inherent in the law of our being.

How long we have been coming to this understanding and how long it will be before we fully understand it! For a full understanding of that fact of unity depends on our own evolution. Until we come to a realization of our true spiritual nature, we will continue to see separateness. What then can we do? We can at least listen to those great seers who have risen to that higher plane of consciousness and if they all agree in what they say we can at least accept it as Truth and long for the time when we too can see it as they do.

Now what do they say? It is the ancient, sometimes called the hermetic or secret teaching of all the great races and religions that there is but one soul in the universe manifesting in variety, manifesting as many. The Hindus call it the *Paramatman,* the individual soul they call the *Jivatman.* It has been called the Adam Kadmon in the Kaballa of the Jews. Swedenborg calls it the Grand Man; Emerson, the Over-Soul. It is also the Universal Christ. It is one of the great mysteries,

—how this can be and we not see it as it is. How can there be only one and we see it as so many? It is said in the Bhagavad-Gita, that great Scripture of the Hindus, "The Supreme Lord abides in all bodies equally." And again, "Indivisible, yet it exists as if divided in beings." I know of nothing more difficult to understand. Yet we must try. Much depends on it to-day. We are still having wars and rumors of wars. Who heeds the words of St. Paul, "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another"?

Greed and desire for possession are paramount in the world to-day. It takes some horrible calamity as has just befallen, (the earthquake in Japan), to draw people together and perhaps beget a better understanding. Under such circumstances at once everything is forgotten in the desire to help. Loss of life and property is something that we can understand, and it is most inspiring to see the true spirit of brotherhood that comes out at such a time. No theorizing is necessary, no philosophy, just the outpouring of love and mercy goes freely to those who are suffering and many will be the sacrifices made in the months to come by those who perhaps a short time ago were full of criticism and suspicion. The great lesson for us to take to our hearts is the feeling of oneness that comes at such a time, the feeling of pity which is akin to love. Often we might say that to love our neighbor as ourself was impossible, but at such a time we have a stronger feeling than one of self. Selfish love ceases as we think of the suffering and the loss and the necessity for patience and courage in starting life again for those who are left. It is inspiring to think of the many congregations who are listening to-day to words of love and sympathy being poured out from the fulness of the heart from many pulpits all over the world as we are drawn together in this common affliction. If we can realize that, it will be a great step toward the realization of the

oneness of life. It almost seems useless to give our attention to the philosophies or theories underlying it, for we can feel it true. It is like the shining of the sun which puts out all the other lights.

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." That touch of nature is the underlying spirit which unites all in oneness. The diversity is all on the outside. What difference does it make that one skin is white and another brown and another black? "He has made of one blood all the Nations of the earth." That there is one life, not many, is fundamental in all deep teaching. The seeming separateness is what is called illusion and is seemingly necessary in the process of development. Some one has said that it seems as if man found every way of going wrong before finding the right way. But when he finds it he knows and that gives him the faith of knowledge which is greater than the faith of belief. The teaching of the Hindu sages and Scriptures is *Tat Twam Asi,* Thou art That, find it out for thyself. This is the end of all life: to know God "Whom to know aright is life eternal." Christ said, "If ye love not your brother whom ye have seen, how can ye love God Whom ye have not seen?"

After rising to heights of the universal we must always come back to the particular with which we have to deal immediately. How to love our brother when he seems unlovely. "Man looketh on the outward appearance." That is natural. Love in its deepest sense is perhaps too intense in its meaning for use in this case. Sympathy is a better word. That is the first step and getting away from prejudice is the next one. We must learn to feel for others and in order to do this we must have imagination, must be able to put ourself in another's place, to take his point of view. If we can throw ourselves into the lives of others and feel for and with them, we enlarge our own consciousness and it is said that speaking

other languages puts us in touch with the thoughts of other peoples. If we go to a new country we are first impressed with the differences; but if we stay long enough and try to understand the people we find that many of those differences disappear; others do but enlarge our life if we let them. If we are so fixed in our own way, however, that cannot happen. Froebel's teaching is to begin with the concrete and expand to the universal, to begin with that which is nearest to us and be led as far as we can go. Most of us wish to do something big, far away, but if each one would try to be sympathetic with those people whom our lives immediately touch, to feel with them, get under their skin, it would be a step in the right direction, and with the big things which pertain to the community, the state, the nation, know that what is bad for one is bad for all. Cultivate a public conscience, enlarge ourself into that of the city, the state, the country and not stop there, but the whole world for it is a unit, expressive of the One Spirit within, which is slowly evolving to a complete consciousness of itself through the evolution of the individual or personal consciousness.

Dostovievsky says: "For our psychology stops at that part of self which emerges from the soil, noting minutely individual differences, but forgetting that this is only the top of the plant, that nine-tenths are buried, the feet held by those of other plants. This profound or lower region of the soil is ordinarily below the threshold of consciousness, the mind feels nothing of it." The symbol of the iceberg is also given to illustrate this fact, the greater part of it being submerged. But what symbol can give any idea of so vast a concept?

In practical living there are so many sides to the question. One thing we must always remember and that is the law of Karma, individual Karma and collective Karma, and another is, that freedom is the only condition of growth. We must

never interfere with any one's freedom to choose and develop his own life. Know that there are many paths all leading to the same goal, that even mistakes are sometimes best, if they bring an awakening or teach a lesson and that each one must learn his own lessons. No one can learn our lessons for us no matter how much he loves us, and the greatest love for the neighbor can often be shown in non-interference.

It is a great comfort to know that when we must sometimes be inactive in our desire to help, that our attitude of mind is very important. Christ said: "And I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me." The Scripture adds "signifying by what death he should die," and it has been so connected with His crucifixion that it is difficult to loosen it, but in the light of greater understanding we must see that He meant something very different, that it has a spiritual significance, that His spiritual upliftment is what is meant, and that in that all men can be included. We can all apply it to ourselves. If we are really all one and this separateness is only what in the highest Hindu philosophy is called *Maya,* illusion of sense, then what we do for ourselves we do for all, be it good or ill, but not in any selfish way. A great educator once told me that the way to decide any question of conventional right and wrong was to make it universal,—would it be well for all to do the same under the circumstances? If I cause my brother to offend by eating meat, then I must abstain. Would we get rid of greed in the world? Get it out of ourselves. Would we eliminate deceit and anger and all uncharitableness? Cast them out of ourselves. Let us look to the beam in our own eye, not the mote in that of the other man. Is not the influence of a true life widespread even as we look at it outwardly?

If then we consider the inner side where there is unity, not diversity, it is even more far-reaching and potent. The sage who has retired from the world is a part of us, sending

out thought which may reach us if we are open to it. The man in the jungle is part of us. Shall his thought reach us or ours reach him in this vast world of unity? You know the lines:—

"Without me God could not one moment live.

"If I to death should go, He too would death receive."

This use of the name "God" of course refers to the immanent God, the Over-Soul about which we have been speaking, the Grand Man in which we all live, and it means to show the impossibility of being disconnected from our Source. If then God and man are one, as is claimed, this must be true. This human plane upon which we are manifesting is one of decision which way we will go—up or down. Shall we help or shall we hinder? Shall we live to ourselves alone, which no one really can, if what we claim is true, or shall we feel a part of that great whole and strive to help in every way that we can toward the development of that consciousness of unity implied in the simple teaching of all ages and all prophets and all Saviours,—"Love thy neighbor as thyself."

WHO IS THY NEIGHBOR?

Quoted From Prof. Josiah Royce

What, then, is our neighbor? Thou hast regarded his thought, his feeling, as somehow different from thine. Thou hast said, 'A pain in him is not like a pain in me, but something far easier to bear.' He seems to thee a little less living than thou; his life is dim, it is cold, it is a pale fire beside thy own burning desires. . . . So, dimly and by instinct hast thou lived with thy neighbor, and hast known him not, being blind. Thou hast made (of him) a thing, no Self at all. Have done with this illusion, and simply try to learn the truth. Pain is pain, joy is joy, everywhere, even as in thee. In all the

songs of the forest birds; in all the cries of the wounded and dying, struggling in the captor's power; in the boundless sea where the myriads of water-creatures strive and die; amid all the countless hordes of savage men; in all sickness and sorrow; in all exultation and hope, everywhere, from the lowest to the noblest, the same conscious, burning, wilful life is found, endlessly manifold as the forms of the living creatures; unquenchable as the fires of the sun, real as these impulses that even now throb in thine own little selfish heart. Lift up thy eyes, behold that life, and then turn away, and forget it as thou canst; but, if thou hast known that, thou hast begun to know thy duty.

THE SPIRIT OF ASIAN CULTURE

By T. L. Vaswani, M. A.

The word for culture in ancient books is *prabuddhita.* He who, by being adored alike in India, China, Korea and Japan, has become the nexus of the nations of the East—Sakyamuni Buddha—was the typical man of "Culture." This culture, *prabuddhita,* is not mere understanding, the *verstanden* of German philosophy. Culture is the life of the higher reason in man. India has been a votary of culture from the beginning of her days; indeed it has been said over and over again in Indian scriptures that there is no *mukti* (salvation) without culture. Knowledge is increase of sorrow; such is the sentiment of an ancient Jewish writer. The Aryan sentiment is different; knowledge is the ending of sorrow. This knowledge, this higher reason, is often referred to also as *darshan,* vision. Of What? Vision of the One Eternal Self in all. There to my mind, is the very secret of Asian culture.

Asia is one because Asia has borne witness to this Spirit-consciousness through the ages. The culture problem has been approached in the East from diverse standpoints,—intellectual,

aesthetic, ethical, religious; it has engaged the attention of thinkers and poets and prophets in India, in Persia, in China, in Japan, in Arabia, in Afghanistan. The problem has been interpreted in diverse tongues and diverse ways; but there is, I believe, an underlying unity. For the soul-consciousness of Asia is one. It is indicated in the text of an Upanishad which says:—"The Eternal is one; He hath no caste." Asian culture is one continuous effort through the ages to interpret in art and poetry and philosophy and worship this consciousness of the One Eternal Self in all. Not without significance is the fact that all the world-religions have been born in Asia. Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Islam are Asian in their inspiration; and Christianity is a gift of the East to the West. Asia, unlike Europe, has not talked of conflict between science and religion. Nor have Asian sages imagined, as some western thinkers have, a conflict betwen culture and nature. Culture in India has been regarded as growing out of nature's inspiration; and some of the noblest books which have enriched the world's literature were written in *asrams,* in forest-universities. Asian culture, again, is not like the *kulturs* of European nations, an aggressive force. The ancient culture of India developed on no narrow nationalism; it was inspired by profound reverence for humanity, indeed for all forms of life. Kinship with all creatures in and through the universal Self,—that was the supreme conviction of Hindu and Buddhist cultures in their highest forms.

Asian idealism, is the world's piteous need to-day. The Vision Spiritual was the secret of Asiatic greatness in the past; the Vision Spiritual is what a bankrupt Europe needs urgently to-day to enrich civilization. As that seer of science, the late Professor Tyndal, said "The light once came from the East; once more will the light return to Europe from the

East." I believe profoundly in Asia's spiritual message to the West. The world looks to Indians to give the message; and they can give it,—but on one condition; that they do it in deep humility for the service of humanity. Patriotism tarnished with pride, with passion, with hate and strife, will not make India great. A Chinese sage has said: "Be gentle and you will be bold; be simple and you will be liberal; be humble and you will be a leader among men." And if India is to be, as I believe the spirit of history wants her to be, a spiritual leader among the nations, she must be humble,—a servant of humanity, a servant of God. The modern age dominated by machinery and materialism may yet be saved by the spirit of Asian culture, by the Vision Spiritual which has inspired the philosophies and literatures and arts and idealisms of the East. (*Reprinted from "Orient"*)

INDIA'S TASK

By Rev. C. F. Andrews

(Excerpt from a recent address)

I believe that India is to teach the world what Christ truly taught; what life Christ truly lived; what Christ truly was and is. For in the West, what I feel so much on my return to England is this, that we in England and in Europe have lost for a time the Christ; we have lost him in our belief in force, in our belief in violence and war; we have lost him in our search for wealth, and for more wealth, and for ever more wealth. We have lost him in our greed for possessions and empires and colonies and all the rest. So we have to find him again. We have to find him, who said, "Come unto me all ye who are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest to your soul; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

REPORT

November at the Vedanta Centre of Boston was marked by two special events. On November 21st, students and friends of Swami Paramananda held a reception in his honour at the Centre. It was a tribute to him and to his work and its object was, not only to express to the Swami before his return to California, the devotion, loyalty and gratitude of the Boston members, but to draw them together in tangible expression of this, and in active co-operation with his immediate workers. The whole affair was carried through with lovely feeling and culminated in a love-offering to the Swami,— a surprise check enclosed in a charming silk case,—which was given to him in the name of many devoted followers. In a future issue of the "Message" a fuller report of this reception will be given.

The second event of interest was the Thanksgiving Service held for the first time on Thanksgiving morning. The Swami spoke on "Thankfulness" in its pure spiritual aspect, showing how man who thinks he does so much of himself, can do nothing apart from the Divine. In illustration of this he cited that portion of the Kena-Upanishad which tells of the victory of *Brahman* (the Supreme) over the gods. Before and after the Swami's address there was special music. White flowers shone in the shrine and upon the outer altar, and true peace was felt in all hearts.

The Swami expects to return to Ananda Ashrama, California, before Christmas and will not be back in Boston until the Spring. The activities of the Boston Centre will be carried on by his assistants with the aid of those members of the Boston work who feel the desire to express in this way their deep feeling for the Centre. It is, in fact, upon the active, practical expression of that interest that the future welfare of the Boston work depends.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES."—*Rig-Veda*

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

JANUARY, 1924.

ABUNDANT LIFE

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.
Published monthly except in August and September

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NEW YEAR REFLECTIONS

LET the spirit of service inspire us and exalt our life, teaching us how to serve God with our whole-hearted and consecrated devotion. Can we serve God save through His children? Service to God ever remains an abstract ideal except when it fills our life with love and selfless devotion and extends its beneficence to our fellow-beings. We can serve through our thoughts, our words and our actions. It is not merely the mental concept that will enable us to realize this highest ideal,—the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. It must enter into our inmost being and find its expression through our outer activities. Service is sweet and it is ever refreshing to the soul who makes it his constant companion. We serve best when we realize that God is the Lord of this life. He is the possessor of it and we are all His children, our will must ever be subservient to His Will. When we arm ourselves with this spirit, forsaking the dictate of our self-will and egotistic feelings, then no longer it becomes a difficult task for us to realize the sacred meaning of life and our existence.

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, let us be resolute to make our spiritual ideal a course of practical living without unnatural strain or stress, directing all our energies to this lofty end, allowing our life current to flow as a river flows—naturally, recognizing no obstacle—to the great ocean.

—*Swami Paramananda.*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Thou wilt show me the path of life. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.—*The Bible.*

In truth there is such a happy paradise. But the country is spiritual and it is accessible only to those that are spiritual. Thou sayest it lies in the west. This means, look for it where he who enlightens the world resides. The sun sinks down and leaves us in utter darkness, the shades of night steal over us, and Mara, the evil one, buries our bodies in the grave. Sunset is nevertheless no extinction, and where we imagine we see extinction, there is boundless light and inexhaustible life.—*Gospel of Buddha.*

To educate is not to give a trade for making one's living, but to temper the soul for life.—*Spanish Saying.*

Do not let worldly thoughts and anxieties disturb your mind. Do everything that is necessary in its proper time and let your mind be always fixed on God.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

Uncover those secret recesses where Nature is sitting at the fires in the depths of her laboratory.—*Swedenborg.*

For surely little-mindedness thwarts above everything else the soul that is destined ever to aspire to grasp truth, both divine and human, in its integrity and universality.—*Plato.*

O boundless Form, Thou art the Primeval Deity, the Ancient Being, Thou art the Supreme Refuge of this universe; Thou art the Knower, the One to be known and the Supreme Abode. By Thee alone is this universe pervaded.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

ABUNDANT LIFE

Address by Swami Paramananda

"Every man's words who speaks from that life must sound vain to those who do not dwell in the same thought on their own part," Emerson reflects. "I dare not speak of it. My words do not carry its august sense; they fall short and cold. Only itself can inspire whom it will, and behold: their speech shall be lyrical and sweet, and universal as the rising of the wind." What must be the magnitude of the true sphere of life—life that enables the individual to transcend his boundary lines of self-limitation, transforming smallness into vastness, harshness into sweetness, and sordidness into lyrical and universal beauty. What hinders our access to this great sphere of life which mystics acclaim and seers experience with vivid reality? Guatama Buddha tells us it is the self. "Where self is, Truth cannot be. Self is death and Truth is life. The cleaving to self is a perpetual dying, while moving in the truth is partaking of Nirvana, which is life everlasting."

It is not Buddha alone who tells us of this great impediment, but Christ also with very definite feeling proclaims: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." To the unthinking mind this offers a strange conundrum, for how can a man find eternal life by losing his life? It cannot mean losing the true life, for that is immortal. We can never lose it. But how little we know of this true life! Our knowledge is more of the apparent. Forgetting and forsaking the real source, we cling to the apparent and in time it becomes all in all. It is this phase of our consciousness that Christ and Buddha admonish us to abandon in order to find access to eternal life.

Living beings cannot find the true expression of life until

they know the source of life. Can a man experience fullness of life in the flesh merely by developing his muscles, his body and all that is pertaining to the physical? This may bring him certain momentary satisfaction; but how far-reaching is it, how deep, how enduring? We do not need to ask. No testimony of philosopher or saint is needed to convince us of the futility, the impermanence, the absolute unreliability of the material world. Yet invariably we turn to those very things which are forever disappointing us. It is due to mental distortion.

The distinction between the real and the apparent belongs not only to the spiritual world, but to the world of life, at whatever point we touch it. A man who has no sense of values expends his life and energy on something which either brings him no return or a return that is insufficient. As a result he suffers from depression; he grieves; he is vexed with himself because he has spent so much of his vital force and yet has nothing to show for it. Whether or not we take interest in profound spiritual subjects, we are all interested in life itself, because we are living and we want to be more living. We want to find access to that life which knows no limit. Within every one of us there is an inherent longing for the fullest expression of life. Young and old alike constantly hold fast to life, because life itself is the most vital reality. This life of ours, when we find it in full measure, satisfies us, makes us unshakable, more worthy of our vocation. On the other hand, when our life seems contracted and our self-expression is hindered, then we feel it is better to die. But really no one wants to die. Have you ever heard of any one who actually wanted to die? If you have it does not mean that such people did not have inherent longing for life. They wished to die because they had not enough life to carry their burden, they had not enough strength to bear their failures and disappointments.

What we want is life in a larger sphere. When our life here feels restricted, then we seek expansion and freedom. It is what every individual being is seeking. Even one whom we may call a criminal, even he is trying to find life's expression, but he does not know how to direct his effort. A man who is full of self-will and selfish instincts impedes his own purpose in over-haste to gratify his selfish whims and desires. Naturally he suffers reaction. The life in him which is part of the Eternal suffers because of his selfishness. Sin and selfishness are inseparable. We are not born in sin or iniquity, we bring it upon ourselves by thinking on matter and limiting our scope to the physical aspect of our being. The finite man who severs himself from the infinite source, he it is who feels the burden and finds himself inadequate, so inadequate that he takes to scheming and crooked means for the fulfillment of his desires. But that man who has found his connection with the infinite and unbounded life, he does not have to seek such small means. All things come to him fully and freely.

Take the obstacle away from the light, and the light will flood your room. Open the windows of your heart and soul and let the light enter therein. The light will cleanse, the light will free you from all imperfections. It will give you renewed strength and courage. Every man in order to find the fullest expression must be something more than he imagines himself to be. However, it is not borrowed knowledge that gives us this exalted vision. A man may repeat to himself, "I am a child of God, I am a partaker of the infinite and immortal life;" but he must know it in his heart, not only sometimes, but at all times. And not only must he know it in his heart, he must show it in his actions even at those moments when he is taken unaware. Such a man exerts a powerful and constructive influence upon other lives. Even his physical

being becomes vibrant, because it is life which vibrates through him.

Another who repeats these things without knowing their import, and without knowing their value, merely carries a weight, unaware of its precious qualities. We must not be like parrots. You may teach a parrot beautiful songs—songs of the immortal soul, songs of the Supreme Deity and he will repeat them so long as he is not molested. But if a cat comes after him he forgets the holy songs because he has never taken in their meaning. So is it with our life. We sing certain songs, we follow certain routines, we fulfill certain duties; perhaps we are even able to quote religious truths glibly. But for how long? So long as we are not molested by the circumstances of life. If something goes wrong, if something happens that is out of the ordinary, we are thrown off our feet, we lose our bearing and our sense of proportion, because we did not have them well established.

We all of us carry within us the sacred light of life. But it does one very little good to carry even a priceless treasure if one does not know its value. The flame that burns in saints and in men of genius—the bright light we see in them—that same flame burns also in us, but we must know how to make it shine through us. We must cherish it. We must unfold it. This is the true import of life, not only of spiritual life, but of all life. Try never to limit it through small mental concepts. You are a living being, a factor in the cosmic universe. That gives you access to the very source of life.

We find some people who seem to be inexhaustible, who express big ideas and ideals and accomplish great deeds. No man is inexhaustible in himself, but every man can become inexhaustible when he ceases to identify himself with the material aspect of his life and realizes his spiritual reality.

He who is without guile or selfish motive, without thought of greed or gain, enters into that higher consciousness, and when he gains his access there, he finds within his own soul something which he expresses in his outer life. It is in this blending of inner and outer that we see the true expression of life. A man who is living with divided consciousness is always aware that his life is not in harmony with his spiritual ideals. This becomes a constant weakening factor in his character. We cannot cheat ourselves; how much less then can we cheat any one else? These ideas and ideals are not to be kept on the shelf; they are to be utilized in our every-day living, in our business, in our dealings with others. If we have the burning flame of life within, it will shine and throw its glow upon our path, dispelling all our perplexities.

We cannot afford to cut ourselves off from the source of our life. Many believe that religion means merely subscribing to a creed or professing a certain faith, and that our religious duty ends there. Our duty may begin there, but must not end there. We must make our ideal a part of our daily life and consciousness. It is that which makes us truly living. We must prove to ourselves that we are living parts of the infinite source. The finite and the infinite must blend together. The inner and outer must run in absolute harmony, and that is what I mean by abundant life. In course of our spiritual evolution when we once reach this exalted state, we can never be cut off from the fountain-head no matter where or how we are placed. The realization of this unfailing life burns like a bright light and ever accompanies us. Did not some of the mystic sages cry out: "Even if Thou shouldst throw me into hell, I fear not so long as I know Thou art in me." It is this conviction that enables us to surmount all our self-limitations. We may build homes filled with comfort and luxuries, we may plan and scheme to secure lasting happi-

ness; but we can never find permanence in the midst of impermanence. A wise man, however, builds a house that is not dependent on locality; he carries it with him. His resting-place is within; his source of strength is within, and because of that it is unfailing. He is not dependent on some one to console him, to entertain him, or to give him inspiration. He always carries his inspiration with him.

There is an abundant source. Christ proclaimed it. Buddha proclaimed it. Not only did they proclaim it, but they proved it: a life that even death cannot endanger, a life that is unbounded. Have we faith in that life? That is the whole question. That is the testing point. If we place our whole faith, hope and expectation on things that are material we cannot have any satisfying results. Changing our point of view does not mean that the truth can be changed. We are told from the beginning in every Scripture,—First seek ye the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Truth, all other things, without any exception, will be added unto you. But man deliberately goes in the opposite direction. Instead of seeking first what comes first, he seeks the gratification of all else first and makes God a matter of secondary interest. After he has finished with all his desires, after he has satisfied the hunger of his body, then he may think of his soul. But it is the soul which sustains the body. It is the Spirit which sustains and governs matter. It is life which makes us living.

If we do not take account of life, how can we be living? And if we are not living truly and worthily, how can we be happy and full of peace? If we lack in the right principle, it is not only a calamity for our individual life, but a burden that we throw upon our families, upon our communities. Because of one person's wrong point of view a whole country may become demoralized. Why should it not? We are part of the infinite whole. Let no one ever think lightly of him-

self. This does not mean that we should become arrogant and self-important. Not so. But let none think that he has no place, no mission, no vocation in life. We all have! We are born here, we are brought up here, we are given a distinct place in this cosmic universe, and until we are able to fill it with intelligence, with a sense of consecration and whole-hearted devotion, we are neither fulfilling the mission of our individual life nor are we giving anything to the fulfillment of our higher life.

This is a question that rises often within us, and how often we try to silence it. We do not wish to be bothered with it. But it is not a bother. Soul is never a bother to the individual life. It is the sustaining influence. When we limit ourselves, when we make ourselves like prisoners, then we suffer. And we make ourselves prisoners by our own thoughts. Sometimes we breathe noxious air. It sickens us, our whole system feels poisoned by it. Then again we enter an atmosphere which is clear and pure and as we breathe we are inspired and filled with new life. The soul also breathes and it inhales only what we give it to inhale. Wrong thoughts are like noxious vapors. One who inhales thoughts of hatred or anger or jealousy does he not become poisoned, is he not devitalized by them? How can he expect to find self-expression or happiness when he allows himself to live in that atmosphere?

There are certain thoughts which narrow our sphere, which make us feel suffocated and unhappy, and there are other thoughts which make us feel as if we were breathing the fresh air of the heights. They lift us to a lofty altitude, they invigorate and inspire us and even in a weak body they infuse strength. One who systematically forms the habit of breathing that pure air of the Spirit—of love, kindliness, purity—not only does he find himself invigorated spiritually, but even his body is reanimated; it expresses finer qualities and shows

forth a quickening of the Spirit. He is able to do things which are good and lasting. We often exclaim,—How full of vigor that man is, one can feel his vibration of purity, his magnetism and his innate power! Another man carries with him a dead weight of dullness. Do not think that this is due to accident. When we connect ourselves with the source of life, we are always filled with life, vigor and energy. And remember that that source is not the exclusive property of any man or nation or religious cult. It is the natural, universal heritage of all mankind. But we must know this, and as we know this we become truly children of God and truly religious.

Religion is not written in a book or in a creed, it is the expression of the soul. The individual feels its power, he feels its blessing, and as he feels these within his soul, he cannot help but express them. A man may live silently in a community and yet infuse great power and light. Whether we believe in one religion or another makes no difference. The infinite sky can never be partitioned off by any man; no one has the power to do it. Infinite wisdom is never divided, nor can it ever be labelled. No one can shut you off from it. Believe in it, carry that thought within yourself even in your less important tasks. There are those who think they must not try to mix these high ideals with their menial tasks, or with their business activities. But those are the occasions when we need them most to shield us, to sustain us, to give us the power to set a new standard.

Often we hear the excuse: "How can we do this when everybody else is going the other way? How can we change the current of thought? It is useless for us to try to do something different, people do not believe in these things." It is not useless. The power of life is infinite. The reason we do not feel its infinite power is because we have not the faith, we have not the conviction. When we have understanding,

real understanding that is not dependent on hearsay; when we know this, not because some one has written about it, but because we have experienced it directly, then no one can shake us, then we can walk through life undaunted, unmolested, just as some people walk through fire without being burned. There is that saying in the Gita: Fire cannot burn the Spirit; water cannot wet It, air cannot dry It, sword cannot pierce It. That is the true life. If we can partake of that life and carry it with us, even in small measure—that abounding life—then are we incapable of doing anything that is harmful to ourselves or to any one. We shall not be afraid. Fear always comes through selfishness; it always accompanies ignorance.

Life and light are the true attributes of the soul. When these are constant companions on our path, we need fear nothing and none need fear us. We only fall in ignorance when there is no light before us. We are selfish because we forget our infinite heritage. We are so overwhelmed with our finite limitations that we think we must become selfish in order to bring happiness into our life. But all that vanishes, just as darkness must always vanish before the light. Let us fill ourselves with true light no matter where we find it; whether in the Bible, or in the sayings of Buddha, or at any other source. Let it fill us! Hold fast to it. Let it become a beneficent, radiating factor in our life, that through our own life it may reach other lives. Why do people suffer? Wherefrom comes their suffering? It is the lack of life! It is the lack of light!

That light we have already within us. It is our potential heritage. If we can unfold it even in a small degree it will suffice, it will fill our whole being with gladness, with joy and with vital power. Then it will no longer be a question of calculation: shall I be unhappy or shall I be happy? Shall I maintain my peaceful bearing when some one molests me, or shall I not? These questions will not rise, because then we

shall have found our dignity and our magnitude. In our quest for this we are sometimes stranded like the traveller in the desert-land seeing nothing but the barrenness and dryness before him. But if he persists and does not succumb to hopelessness and despondency, he finds that even the desert holds in its bosom the water of life. Likewise if we, in spite of all our apparent difficulties, persevere with noble thoughts and aspirations, we shall in time find our access to the hiddenmost part of our being which is abounding with inexhaustible life and eternal blessing.

HYMN TO USHA

Vedic Hymn to the Goddess of Dawn

She shines upon us, like a young wife, rousing every living being to go to his work. When the fire had to be kindled by men, she made the light by striking down darkness.

She rose up, spreading far and wide, and moving everywhere. She grew in brightness, wearing her brilliant garment. The mother of cattle, the mornings, the leader of the days, she shone gold-colored, lovely to behold.

She, the fortunate, who brings the eye of the gods, who leads the white and lovely steed of the sun, the Dawn was seen revealed by her rays, with brilliant treasures.

Thou art a blessing where thou art near, drive far away the unfriendly; make the pasture wide, give us safety! Scatter the enemy, bring riches! Raise up wealth to the worshipper, thou mighty Dawn.

Shine for us with thy best rays, thou bright Dawn, thou who lengthenest our life, thou the love of all, who givest us food, who givest us wealth in cows, horses and chariots.

Thou daughter of the sky, thou high-born Dawn, whom the *Vasishthas* magnify with songs, give us riches high and wide, all ye gods protect us always with your blessings.

REALIZATION

From a Letter of Swami Turiyananda

The highest object of human life is the realization of God, and human life is the highest life, since the realization is possible in it alone. Sense-pleasures and whatever else there is, can be had in other lives also, but God-realization is not to be attained in any other life except the human. To put it in philosophical language, the goal of human life is the cessation of all misery and the attainment of supreme bliss. But though the methods of expression may be different, yet there is no difference in the reality. What is meant by the word God in the devotee's language, the Yogi indicates by the term Supreme Self, and the *Jnani* describes it by the word Brahman. So God-realization, or illumination, or *Mukti* mean the same thing, and this is undoubtedly the supreme goal of every being.

It is the law of nature that one gets what one desires. Whenever there is sincere desire or yearning, the desired object is surely attained. Directly there is longing in the heart, such longing that without Him life would be impossible, one obtains a vision of Him. You have but to realize this state, and you attain the aim of your life. You must have your whole mind absorbed in the Lord. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "Be dissolved in Him." "He who does My work, who is wholly absorbed in Me, who is My devotee and without attachment, who bears enmity to no creature, such a man attains to Me, O Arjuna." (Bhagavad-Gita).

There is no doubt that the practice of *Japa* and meditation is necessary, but there is no guarantee that these will suffice to realize Him. His grace is the only means of realizing Him —there is no other way. Swamiji used to say, "Is God fish and vegetables that you pay so much and get Him in exchange! Has God any fixed value that you go through so much *Japa* and such and such austerities and realize Him!" You realize

Him when you obtain His grace. And this grace comes to one who can surrender himself to Him whole-heartedly. I do not say these things to dampen your spirit. Have as much religious practice as you like, but all this will fructify only when you can whole-heartedly surrender yourself to Him. This is what I mean to say. Give up everything to Him and be at peace—this is my idea. Go on towards Him as far as you can, and then He Himself will do the rest.

TRUST IN GOD

By Rabbi Bacchye

(A Jewish Philosopher of Spain, Eleventh Century)

He who trusts in his own wisdom or abilities, or in the strength of his body and in his own efforts, will labour in vain, weaken his powers and find his skill inadequate to the attainment of his desires; . . . . and trust in wealth may be the destruction of the soul. He who trusts in God will be led to serve none other than Him, in that he will not build his hopes on a man, and will not wait, in anxious anticipation, for any human being; and he will not serve them, or try to curry favour with them; and he will not be hypocritical to please mankind to the detriment of his service of God; and he will have no fear of man nor of human fault-finding. He will be independent, and strip off from himself the livery of human favours and benefactions.

He who trusts in God is able to turn his attention from worldly anxieties and devote it to doing what is right. For in the restfulness of his soul and the liberty of his mind, and in the diminution of his anxieties in regard to worldly affairs, he may be compared to an alchemist who knows how to turn silver into gold and brass and tin to silver. Only that he is better off; for he needs neither implements nor materials in his alchemy, and he needs not store up his gold in fear of

robbers, nor restrict his production to what is only enough for the day and be in fear for the morrow. For he has confidence that God will supply his wants when and where it may be requisite.

If he who trusts in God is wealthy, he will hasten cheerfully to fulfill all the religious and ethical obligations of wealth; and if he be without wealth, he will look upon its absence as a blessing from God, relieving him from the responsibilities its possession involves, and from the anxiety of guarding and administrating it.

The wealthy man who trusts in God will not find his wealth a hindrance to his faith; for he does not place his reliance upon his wealth, which is, in his eyes, trust-money assigned to him for a limited period that he may apply it in various appointed ways. He will not be proud, nor will he make any mention of his goodness to any one to whom he has been commanded to give some of his wealth, and he will not require any reward or thanks, or praise; but he will render thanks to the Creator who has made him the agent of His beneficence. And if he loses his wealth he will not be anxious, or mourn its absence, but will be thankful to God at the taking away of what was only entrusted to him, just as he thanked God for the original gift; and he will rejoice in his portion, and not seek the injury of any one else, and not envy any other man his wealth.

The worldly advantages of trust in God include peace of mind from worldly anxieties, and rest for the soul from the disturbances of trouble caused by any want in the satisfaction of bodily appetites.

Who wants great things must practise self-control,
In limitation shows himself the master,
And liberty needs laws for wise direction. —*Goethe.*

INTRINSIC VALUE OF THE VEDAS

Excerpt from Max Muller

As the language of the Veda, the Sanskrit, is the most ancient type of the English of the present day (Sanskrit and English are but varieties of one and the same language), so its thoughts and feelings contain in reality the first roots and germs of the intellectual growth which by an unbroken chain connects our own generation with the ancestors of the Aryan race,—with those very people who at the rising and setting of the sun listened with trembling hearts to the songs of the Veda, that told them of bright powers above, and of a life to come after the sun of their own lives had set in the clouds of the evening. Those men were the true ancestors of our race; and the Veda is the oldest book we have in which to study the first beginnings of our language, and of all that is embodied in language. We are by nature Aryan, Indo-European, not Semitic; our spiritual kith and kin are to be found in India, Persia, Greece, Italy, Germany; not in Mesopotamia, Egypt or Palestine. This is a fact that ought to be clearly perceived, and constantly kept in view, in order to understand the importance which the Veda has for us, after the lapse of more than three thousand years, and after ever so many changes in our language, thought and religion.

Whatever the intrinsic value of the Veda, if it simply contained the names of kings, the description of battles, the dates of famines, it would still be, by its age alone, the most venerable of books. Do we ever find much beyond such matters in Egyptian hieroglyphics, or in Cuneiform inscriptions? In fact, what does the ancient history of the world before Cyrus, before 500 B. C., consist of, but meagre lists of Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian dynasties? What do the tablets of Karnak, the palaces of Nineveh, and the cylinders of Babylon tell us about the thoughts of men? All is dead and

barren, nowhere a sigh, nowhere a jest, nowhere a glimpse of humanity. There has been but one oasis in that vast desert of ancient Asiatic history, the history of the Jews. Another such oasis is the Veda. Here, too, we come to a stratum of ancient thought, of ancient feelings, hopes, joys, and fears,—of ancient religion. There is perhaps too little of kings and battles in the Veda, and scarcely anything of the chronological framework of history. But poets, surely, are better than kings; hymns and prayers are more worth listening to than the agonies of butchered armies; and guesses at truth more valuable than unmeaning titles of Egyptian or Babylonian despots. It will be difficult to settle whether the Veda is "the oldest of books," and whether some of the portions of the Old Testament may not be traced back to the same or even an earlier date than the oldest hymns of the Veda. But in the Aryan world, the Veda is certainly the oldest book and its preservation amounts to a marvel.

CHRISTMASTIDE AT ANANDA ASHRAMA

When Swami Paramananda announced his intention of returning to Ananda Ashrama in time to celebrate its first Christmas, some one remarked,—"Oh, Christmas isn't Christmas in California." The California Christmas may not be the snow-covered Christmas of northern countries but it is the Christmas of Judaea, the Christmas of Mary with her Child in the stable, the Christmas of the shepherds watching their flocks under the stars at night. Yes, California in climate and topography is amazingly like the Holy Land.

The Swami arrived in Pasadena from the east, on Wednesday, December 19th. The Christmas Service had been announced for Sunday, December 23rd. How many would come at that busy season to the still retreat in the hills? It was an unanswered question. Sunday was a radiant day. Before sunrise

members of the Ashrama climbed the hills in search of greens. The moon was setting as the sun rose, the lights of five cities still glittered far below, and on the distant horizon the ocean was visible as a shining band in the first flush of dawn.

With many eager hands to help, the living-room of the Ashrama with its great stone fire-place was transformed into a fair-sized auditorium. Along the different levels of the mantle red vigil lights were placed in shining rows while a beautiful wreath of wild cherry and rosy oak apples hung in the center against the chimney, forming a frame for the symbol. At one end of the room were masses of holly berries, poinsettia and a small Christmas tree, while at the other end upon a platform backed by a rare embroidered hanging, stood the Christmas altar with its tall candles, its flowers and garlands and its picture of Virgin and Child.

Motors began to climb the hill early so that when the Service opened, over a hundred people were present. The true spirit of Christmastide breathed through every word of the Swami, and the hush of the holy Presence mingled with the hush of the hills. At the close of his address the Swami announced a Christmas Eve Service primarily for the members of the Ashrama but open to all friends who might care to come. This Service being more for the household had a lovely intimate quality. The Swami sat beside the open fire, beneath the soft glow of the vigil lights and spoke quietly and with depth of tenderness to the faithful workers grouped around him, and the few friends from the outside. As at the Sunday Service there were Christmas carols sung in chorus culminating with the Swami's own "Song of Dawn." It seemed that from our mountain altar real light was flowing out into the world.

Christmas Day which was all sunshine was celebrated by the Ashrama household with real spirit of joy, even the small Ashrama donkey taking part. He came garlanded, with

baskets of gifts at his sides, heading a little procession of the humbler members of the Ashrama, the cow, the heifer, the goat, the kid, accompanied by the Sisters who bore offerings from Ashrama orchard, hillside and garden.

Ever growing interest is being manifested and each Sunday brings an increasing number of visitors, so that soon it will be necessary to have a real auditorium. Steps toward this end are now under way and the next six months should bring great growth and development. People who visited the place six months ago are amazed to see what has already been accomplished.—*Daya.*

SPECIAL RECEPTION

Held at The Vedanta Centre of Boston

The reception tendered Swami Paramananda in November, a brief report of which was given in the December "Message," was a very special occasion, being an expression of the love and gratitude of his Boston friends and students to the Teacher who has given himself to them for so many years unreservedly and selflessly and without any thought of return. This was the keynote of the evening which Mr. Bacon struck very happily when called upon by the chairman. "We cannot emphasize too much," he said, "the fact that we have all come here, some for weeks and some for years, to get what Swami has to give us. We have never been asked to give anything to him. He has always given us. He has never asked us for anything material or otherwise. As we all know, Swami is going to spend considerable time in California, and the time that he spends here will depend largely on how we keep up the work while he is gone. He will come back if we want him. It depends on how much we need him. Swami is too big to stay here and the call of the world has taken him away from us. We must not be selfish; we must let him go; but we must work hard while he is gone and carry on his spirit."

Mr. Mahoney spoke briefly and to the point concerning the Swami's new work in the West. He said that it was bigger than the biggest thing we could imagine: "Something like the small boy who went fishing. When he came home he said: 'I caught a fish, I don't know what kind of a fish, but it's the biggest fish there is.' The mother said, 'It must have been a whale.' 'It couldn't have been a whale,' said the boy, 'for I used a whale for bait.' The Swami's work is even bigger than that." Mr. Mahoney concluded with an appeal to the members to help the Swami in concrete ways. "If we can make his labor lighter," he urged, "we shall make the result much richer."

Mr. Jaqueth's was a personal testimony of spiritual benefit received through his contact with Swami and the Centre: "Since I have become acquainted with The Vedanta Centre and the spirit that reigns throughout the place, I have taken on what I may call a new life, and I believe we all feel that way. Whether Swami remains with us in Boston or decides to settle in the state of California, we have the spirit of Swami with us wherever we go."

Professor Perrin of the Boston University, when called upon to speak, admirably stated the peculiar spiritual good he had derived from contact with the Swami. "What I have learned from the Swami," he explained, "is just this: that you don't do to grow spiritually, you must try to be. The more you try to do, the less progress you make. He who saves his life shall lose it. We must just open our hearts and let the spirit of God flow into them."

Towards the close of the evening, Mr. Ennis, the chairman, bore on a silver tray two silk cases, one containing the check from the members, the other the letters of appreciation which accompanied the various contributions. These he presented to the Swami with deep feeling as a gift going from their hearts to him.

Swami Paramananda, after accepting the gift, rose and made response: "You have touched so many cords that it is very difficult for me to decide which one to take up. You have expressed your thoughts in such a manner that the only adequate response to them would be through silence. Yet there are some things I must speak to-night. This work here in Boston is fifteen years old and during these fifteen years it has gone on so smoothly that I do not think any of you have even questioned how it is carried on. Some of you may have thought that it had a large endowment. It has a great endowment, but not as you may imagine. It has not been through any human endowment that we have been able to carry on this work. In the beginning, but for the earnest spirit of a few people, I might not have established a work here at all. It was those few people who held me. That was the starting-point and from that starting-point the work has reached the stage that you see now.

"Two years ago we enlarged this work and every one then thought it was to be the permanent home. But every work must go on, marching onward and forward. The permanent home we are seeking to create is not contained in the walls of any building. Our permanent work is to arouse people, and I believe that that has been done here, otherwise you would not come. I have asked nothing from you, because through my spiritual blessings I have learned that there is greater joy in giving. We need material help. I do not deny that. Especially in the Occident we need material help at every turn. That was one of the great problems I had to solve in connection with this work, and also I felt the immensity of my task because I had no confidence in my own powers. All I felt was that I was called to do something and I wanted to do it with all my heart and soul. Yet in spite of that inner yearning and zeal to give what I had to give, I could not deny the facts of

cold winters and rigid material conditions. It is not here as in India where a monk is recognized by his garb and does not have to worry about how he is going to eat, what he is going to wear, or where he is going to sleep. It was my faith that laid the foundation for this work. People regarded me as very visionary and enthusiastic when I first came to this country seventeen years ago, because I wanted to establish a work without the mechanism of material organization. How could such an endeavor thrive in this country? But you can see from the fruit that it has been successful. I am not boasting of it. I am telling you to show how we need a tremendous amount of faith.

"All these experiences have taught me to give without seeking, and I have not lacked for anything. The work here has been carried on without any appeal for financial help. That has been its spirit and I want that spirit to prevail. Organizations you have in plenty springing up to-day, to-morrow dissolved by disputes and quarrels. What we want here is spontaneous unity. This work is not less dear to me to-day than it was fifteen years ago. If anything it is dearer. You know how it is when you build up something; you give your whole heart and devotion to it. You are very reluctant to part with it. It is a human feeling which we all have. That human feeling I have more than perhaps you realize. From the point of view of human love and affection I cherish it, and over and above that I have something more—the feeling that comes in connection with spiritual realities. To-night you have given me a sense of gratification, because whatever comes to us without seeking is always the richest offering. You have given it spontaneously with loving hearts; therefore as a gift of love I accept it."

The evening was rounded out with a delightful program of music, poetry and song. Mrs. Porter, a finished artist, gave

three charming recitations, concluding with the Swami's poem "Inspiration." Mrs. Mahoney read a poem of her own called "The Builder" and dedicated to the Swami; while Miss Colby Miss Lewis and Dr. Perry contributed delightful music, a fitting outer expression of the loving spirit of harmony which all contributed.

REPORT

Swami Paramananda left Boston on December 13th for California via Cincinnati and Chicago. On the evening of December 14th he addressed a large and appreciative audience at Unity Auditorium, Cincinnati. The following noon he held a meditation class and in the evening attended a banquet given him by the devoted group of Cincinnati workers who chose this occasion to express their gratitude by presenting to him a generous offering for his Ashrama in California.

Chicago was a new field for the Swami. He had but twelve hours there between trains, yet two public lectures had been arranged. We quote from "The Progressive Thinker": "Third Illinois Church, O. O. F. S., made history last Sunday, when Swami Paramananda, famous author and lecturer, and head of the Vedanta Centre in Boston, and of the Ananda Ashrama (Peace Retreat) in California, lectured here on his first visit to Chicago. On her recent vacation Rev. Jane Priest, pastor of the Third Church, met and studied with the Swami. An arrangement was reached that he lecture in Chicago on his way West. With the co-operation of Mrs. Nellie McCollum it was also arranged for him to lecture at the First Unity Society in the Capitol building in the morning. His 8 o'clock train for California did not permit of his making an evening engagement. The Third Church had 'standing room only' for late-comers, so keen was the interest in this great Hindu priest and poet. His subject was 'Immortal Life' and all enjoyed his sincerity

and eloquence. After the lecture an opportunity to meet the Swami was given not only at the church, but also at the home of Miss Priest, 4007 Drexel Blvd., and he then read from his two books of poems, 'Soul's Secret Door' and 'The Vigil.' Members of the Bookfellows, the Society of Midland Authors, the Poetry Lovers of America, and the Illinois Woman's Press Association, were present to greet him. The spiritual blessing of the Swami's presence seemed to hover over the church even after his departure, and many felt a spiritual uplift far beyond the usual."

* * *

It is gratifying to know that the work of the San Francisco Vedanta Society is progressing steadily under the able administration of Swami Prakashananda. Swami Prakashananda conducts the regular Sunday morning Service and the evening Service is held by his assistant, Swami Prabhavananda, who has recently come from India. Also there are two midweek classes conducted by the Swamis. The attendance at all the meetings is excellent.

* * *

Since last autumn Swami Raghavananda, recently arrived from India, has been conducting the lectures and classes at the Vedanta Society of New York. A number of new people have come to hear the Swami and it is expected that the work will grow steadily through his energetic efforts.

* * *

As usual the Christmas Eve Service was held at the Chapel of The Vedanta Centre of Boston. In spite of Swami Paramananda's absence the Service was very impressive and the house was lighted with candles and specially the Christ altar at the corner window overlooking the Parkway. The morning and evening Services on Sunday are ably conducted by Miss Katharine F. Sherwood.

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TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES."—Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

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Relaxation and Receptivity

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Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
'Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall

Published monthly except in August and September

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LOVE

By Swami Paramananda

LOVE! Great immensity!
Unfathomed mystery!
Sacred current of life!
Vibrant, resplendent flame that burneth
eternally,
Consuming all our imperfections,
Healing all our wounds,
And bestowing peace upon our turbulent
heart!
Hail to Thee, Thou holy Spirit!
Hail to Thee again and evermore,
Thou Giver of pure sight!
Let me lie in Thy protecting arms
And sleep in the warmth of Thy bosom,
And in waking behold Thy beneficent face
That never changeth its tender mercy.
To Thee I turn my face
And on Thee I fix my eager gaze
Now and let it be through eternity.

Ananda-Ashrama December 29, 1923.

STRUGGLE FOR EXPANSION

Hitherto unpublished article by Swami Vivekananda

(The following article was one of three written by Swami Vivekananda with his own hand during his first visit in America to answer questions put by a Western disciple. This disciple kept them for his private use until recently when he passed them over for publication in the "Message." The other articles will appear in subsequent numbers.)

The old dilemma whether the tree precedes the seed or the seed the tree, runs through all our forms of knowledge. Whether intelligence is first in the order of being, or matter; whether the ideal is first or the external manifestation; whether freedom is our true nature or bondage of law; whether thought creates matter or matter thought; whether the incessant change in nature precedes the idea of rest or the idea of rest precedes the idea of change; all these are questions of the same insoluble nature. Like the rise and fall of a series of waves, they follow one another in an invariable succession, and men take this side or that according to their tastes or education or peculiarity of temperaments.

For instance, if it be said that seeing the adjustment of nature of different parts, it is clear that it is the effect of intelligent work; on the other hand it may be argued that intelligence itself being created by matter and force in the course of evolution could not have been before this world. If it be said that the production of every form must be preceded by an ideal in the mind, it can be urged with equal force, that the ideal was itself created by various external experiences. On the one hand the appeal is to our ever present idea of freedom; on the other, to the fact that nothing in the universe being causeless, everything both mental and physical is rigidly bound by the law of causation. If it be affirmed that, seeing the changes of the body induced by volition, it is evident that thought is the creator of this body, it is equally clear that as change in the body induces a change in the thought, the body must

have produced the mind. If it be argued that the universal change must be the outcome of a preceding rest, equally logical argument can be adduced to show that the idea of unchangeability is only an illusory relative notion, brought about by the comparative differences in motion.

Thus in the ultimate analysis all knowledge resolves itself into this vicious circle, the indeterminate interdependence of cause and effect. Judging by the laws of reasoning, such knowledge is incorrect; and the most curious fact is that this knowledge is proved to be incorrect, not by comparison with knowledge which is true, but by the very laws which depend for this basis upon the selfsame vicious circles. It is clear, therefore that the peculiarity of all our knowledge is that it proves its own insufficiency. Again, we cannot say that it is unreal, for all the reality we know and can think of is within this knowledge. Nor can we deny that it is sufficient for all practical purposes. This state of human knowledge which embraces within its scope both the external and the internal worlds is called *Maya*. It is unreal because it proves its own incorrectness. It is real in the sense of being sufficient for all the needs of the animal man.

Acting on the external world *Maya* manifests itself as the two powers of attraction and repulsion. In the internal its manifestations are desire and non-desire (*pravritti* and *nivritti*). The whole universe is trying to rush outwards. Each atom is trying to fly off from its centre. In the internal world, each thought is trying to go beyond control. Again each particle is checked by another force, the centripetal, and drawn towards the centre, so in the thought world the controlling power is checking all these outgoing desires.

Desires of materialization, that is, the being dragged down more and more to the plane of mechanical action belong to the animal man. It is only when the desire to prevent all such bond-

age to the senses arises that religion dawns in the heart of man. Thus we see that the whole scope of religion is to prevent man from falling into bondage of the senses and to help him to assert his freedom. The first effort of this power of *Nivritti* towards that end, is called morality. The scope of all morality is to prevent this degradation and break this bondage. All morality can be divided into the positive and the negative elements; either it says, "Do this," or "Do not do this." When it says "Do not," it is evident that it is a check to a certain desire which would make a man a slave. When it says "do", its scope is to show the way to freedom and to the breaking down of a certain degradation which has already seized the human heart.

Now this morality is only possible if there be a liberty to be attained by man. Apart from the question of the chances of attaining perfect liberty, it is clear that the whole universe is a case of struggle to expand, or in other words to attain liberty. This infinite space is not sufficient for even one atom. The struggle for expansion must go on eternally until perfect liberty is attained. It cannot be said that this struggle to gain freedom is to avoid pain or to attain pleasure. The lowest grade of beings, who can have no such feeling, also are struggling for expansion and according to many, man himself is the expansion of these very beings.

The contemplative man may not be idle. If he be weary and temptation rise in his prayers he may labor with his hands some honest and profitable work either for himself if he have need, or for others. If the contemplative man have not sufficient to live withal but through his labor, then may he make the shorter prayers for his necessary labor and that labor be the perfection and increasing of his prayer.—*St. Bridget of Sweden.*

THE CLOUDS OF EGOISM

By Sri Ramakrishna

The sun can give heat and light to the whole world, but he can do nothing when the clouds are in the sky and shut out his rays. Similarly so long as the cloud of egoism is in the soul, the light of God does not shine upon it. Egoism is a cloud that keeps God hidden from our sight.

If I hold up this cloth before me, you cannot see me though I shall be as near you. So also God is nearer to you than anything else, yet because of the screen of egoism you cannot see Him.

Egoism shuts the light out. When "I" will die, all trouble will cease. When through the grace of God the idea of "I am the non-doer" is firmly settled in the heart, a man becomes free even in this life and there is no more fear for him.

Those who seek for fame are under delusion. They forget that everything is ordained by the disposer of all things—the Supreme Being—and that all is due to the Lord and no one else. It is the wise who say always, "It is Thou, it is Thou, O Lord," but the ignorant and the deluded say, "It is I, it is I".

How can the idea of egohood be destroyed? It requires constant practice to do it. If you find that you cannot make this "I" go, then let it remain as the "servant I." There is not much danger in the "I" which knows itself as "I am the servant of God; I am His devotee."

If one ponders over the "I" and tries to find out what it is, one sees it is only a word which denotes egoism. It is extremely difficult to shake off. Then one says, "You wicked 'I', if you will not go by any means, remain as the servant of God." This is called the "ripe I".

If you feel proud, feel so in the thought that you are the servant of God, the son of God. Great men have the nature

of children. They are always children before God, so they have no egoism. All their strength is of God, belonging to and coming from Him. They feel they are nothing of themselves.

If we acquire the conviction that everything is done by God's will, that we are only the tool in the hands of God, then are we free even in this life.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Righteousness can be practised only when we have freed our mind from passions of egotism. Perfect peace can dwell only where all vanity has disappeared. Blessed is he who has understood the Dharma. Blessed is he who does no harm to his fellow-beings. Blessed is he who overcomes wrong and is free from passion. To the highest bliss has he attained who has conquered all selfishness and vanity.—*Buddha.*

The difficulty of reconciling the happiness which I connect with good actions and the persecutions which are suffered by virtue is overcome if we restrict our conception of happiness to perfect peace of mind. This peace of mind depends upon the approval of our own conscience. I repeat, there is no other happiness than peace of mind or soul; wherefore our own advantage must bring us to seek such a precious possession, and from the same motive to subdue the passions which disturb it.—*Frederick the Great.*

To bear with those who revile us even as the earth bears up those who dig it is the first of virtues. Bear with reproach even when you can retaliate; but to forget it will be still better. Let a man by patience overcome those who through pride commit excesses. Those who endure abstinence from food are great, next to those who endure the uncourteous speech of others.—*Tiruvalluvar.*

Do not think of your faults; still less of others' faults; look for what is good and strong; and try to imitate it; your faults will drop off like dead leaves when their time comes.

—*Ruskin*

Don't waste your life in doubts and fears; spend yourself on the work before you, well assured that the right performance of this hour's duties will be the best preparation for the hours or ages to follow.—*Benjamin Franklin.*

In the book of songs it is said: "In your secret chamber even you are judged; see you do nothing to blush for, though but the ceiling looks down upon you." Therefore the moral man, even when he is not doing anything, is serious, and even when he does not speak, is truthful.—*Confucius.*

He who looks carefully into the perfect Law, the Law of Freedom, and continues to do so, not listening to it and then forgetting it, but putting it into practice—that man will be blessed in what he does. Therefore speak and act as men who are to be judged by the Law of Freedom.—*Epistle of James.*

Good actions are a guard against the blows of adversity.—*Abu Bekr.*

Use your body as a musician uses his lyre. When it is worn out, you can still sing without accompaniment.—*Plotinus.*

Abandoning without reserve all the desires born of mental fancies, and restraining completely by the mind the entire group of the senses from all directions, with understanding held by firmness, and mind established in the Self, let him thus by degrees attain tranquillity . . . . He whose passions are quieted and mind perfectly tranquil, who has become one with Brahman, being freed from all impurities, to such a devotee comes supreme bliss.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

RELAXATION AND RECEPTIVITY

Class Lecture By Swami Paramananda

Whenever a wire is stretched beyond its capacity it is bound to break, especially if this is done abruptly. Similarly our physical and mental faculties suffer if we place upon them any undue pressure. Our nervous system can easily be compared with an electric wiring system, only it is much more subtle, and a great deal of our unseen life is dependent on it for its unfoldment. Therefore if we are looking for physical help and mental poise, we must pay utmost heed to keeping the nervous system under proper control and in perfect rhythm. Nothing is more efficacious towards this end than the practice of relaxation. Whenever any tense feeling comes upon us if we can relax immediately, we save ourselves from an actual breakdown. Physical relaxation however is impossible when the mind is wrought up through any excessive emotion. If for instance the mind is agitated with fear, the body will invariably grow tense and hard, causing automatic muscular contraction. Also all this is equally true that with a properly relaxed and poised attitude of mind we may go through even a painful operation and be scarcely conscious of physical discomfort.

Perfect relaxation comes from the mental state. If we have the right thought, the right attitude, in spite of ourselves we shall find the body and nervous system relaxing and we shall soon be conscious of a feeling of upliftment. There are certain schools of physical culture at present which teach relaxation through postures. It is true that one posture will enable us to relax more readily than another, but we must not forget that the fundamental idea back of all this is the thought. If a person's mind is restless and tense with emotion, sitting in one position or another will make little difference. Poise is a great gift and proves a most helpful

blessing at every turn of our life, especially in trying circumstances.

The practice of relaxing the body and mind at certain intervals during the accustomed daily round, and of forming regular habits of silent communion with our inward Self, opens a new vista for our self-preservation both physical and mental. How restful it is to come in contact with one who is poised, who has the gift of relaxation. Every one of us can acquire poise and inward power if we are willing to work for it. First of all we must be ready to renounce all impatience with ourselves as well as with others. To maintain poise when some one treats us harshly or accuses us unjustly requires great endurance and patience. Many of us imagine that unless we are endowed with these virtues from birth, it is useless for us even to try for them; but this is not true. Both our body and mind can exhibit far greater endurance than we possess at the present time. We must always be careful, however, not to lose our sense of proportion and put upon ourselves any abnormal strain. What we are incapable of doing to-day, owing to our lack, we may accomplish in due season if we are willing to wait patiently and work temperately. Moderation is another potent factor in giving us poise. It really means cultivating a true sense of value and just proportion, and we cannot cultivate these without benefitting ourselves both in body and mind.

Relaxation not only prevents unnecessary wear and tear in the body and nervous system, but at the same time it produces poise and unites us with the hidden resources of our soul. It is impossible to imagine any true greatness with a scattered and turbulent mind. Poise and power are synonymous. When our mind and heart are calm and collected then alone do we find our access to the inherent potentialities of our soul.

We must be careful not to confound the idea of receptivity with passivity. Passivity does not by any means give us the sterling qualities. For instance, a man does not save his energy through mere inaction and continued lethargy, but rather by learning how to direct his energies through proper channels. What does it mean to make ourselves receptive? It means that if we come in contact with something beautiful, if we go to a concert or a religious service with openness of heart, we feel its beauty. It satisfies us. But if we go with a mind that is already filled with other thoughts we shall have no room for anything else. This mind of ours can be filled with only one substance at a time. You can see how true this is and how simple. Receptivity means opening the mind with a harmonious spirit. If we keep the mind blocked, no matter what the line of thought is, we shall be unable to receive any new inspiration. This is true not only in the spiritual life, but in all departments of life.

There are those who have so ordered their mind and heart that their whole being has become naturally rhythmic and receptive. If they come in contact with great practical ideals, they retain them. There are others upon whom these self-same ideals make no impression, because their mind is already full to the brim. It is like a man absorbed in deep study; you may call him, but he will not hear you; you may tell him wonderful news and repeat it, and still he will not hear. It was from this fact that the Yogis of India,—those who taught practical wisdom,—evolved the simple system of concentration. You may say that it is not simple at all, that it is a very difficult subject. It is simple and difficult at the same time. Sometimes we approach it with a complex mind. The mind is capable of following one line of thought. It is capable of following a thought so subtle, of making itself so one-pointed, that it can penetrate to the very depths where

all mystery will unfold. Also this very mind can become so involved and distracted that we have to spend all our time trying to gather it together.

The majority of people study life from the exterior. They direct their efforts wholly to outside conditions, believing that their fortune is dependent on what is without, but our real life is controlled from within. Those who are spiritually practical, first adjust their inner life. Mind is the vehicle. One thought makes us feel tense, turbulent, feverish, unhappy and restless, while another thought quiets us, gives us a sense of peace and rest. Both have their place in the mind. That is the reason why it is so important for us first to cleanse our own house before we have any quarrel with the outside world. It is wise to solve our own problems before we try to adjust the lives or solve the problems of others. People who are always talking about doing for others will think that this is selfish. But we have a wise ancient saying that one blind man cannot lead another. He may be full of sympathy, he may have great love for his brother, but first of all he has to gain his own sight. Spiritually we have to be awakened, equipped, revived, before we can help another. It is not a difficult task. Our greatest misfortune is when we regard the spiritual life as something entirely apart from our every-day life. It is in our daily living that we find its fulfillment and not in mere theory or in pretence of religion.

The very first sign of spiritual growth is that we become stronger, we have greater understanding, greater endurance, greater power to meet not only our own problems but the problems of others. These qualities unfold and we ourselves know whether we are making any progress or not. As we go on we complain less and less, we are more and more contented, no matter what happens; outside conditions do not bother us, not because we become dull or lack in a sense of

sympathy, but because we have the power of endurance to overcome them. Now, is this not practical? Is it not a help to us in our every day life? We work certain hours and then we must stop to replenish our energies. Gaining this sense of proportion and balance is a great asset. Business men need it; home-workers need it; thinkers and writers need it. Anywhere and everywhere we need this sense of right proportion. It adjusts our whole life.

Poise is the outcome of a certain evolution within. How to gain it is a subject which should interest every one. There cannot be any artificial poise. A person may pretend poise, but unless it is fundamental he is easily overthrown. We must touch a deeper cord in our life, and when we touch it, it will bring out certain special qualities. Then when some one accuses us unjustly, instead of flashing in anger with the thought that we are perfectly justified, a more profound feeling will come upon us and we shall feel that it does not touch us in the least. All that energy will be conserved and we shall find that not only have we kept our nervous balance and grown stronger physically, but another sphere of inner understanding has opened for us.

Things do not happen accidentally. Whenever something goes wrong we are responsible for it in one way or another. Also we have the power to counteract it. Remember that. It will help you always. It is not a question of fate, of a calamity befalling us from outside and causing our ruin. It is not so. We can gradually so adjust ourselves that we overcome misfortune, evil and all these turbulent aspects. It is not that they do not come upon us, but no matter how often they may come and how unexpectedly, we know how to meet them. That is one of the things we all need to learn. Without it we are not safe, nor can we have any poise. There are those who believe in praying for prosperity and the fulfillment of all

their desires. It is all right to do this so long as they crave for these things; but there is something else more needful and that is to be able to meet all difficulties and conditions with perfect evenness of mind and tranquillity.

The Bhagavad-Gita gives a very tremendous thought, not only for the few, but for all: even-mindedness in all circumstances. It is one of the fundamental themes of the Gita. We are not told that all is going to be made smooth for us, but we are told to rise above all things. As we come in contact with external life, we experience heat and cold, pleasure and pain. When we lack discrimination we take these seriously, as though they were going to be lasting. We magnify them; sometimes we think that they are going to ruin our life and we settle down to brooding unhappiness. So Sri Krishna, the Lord of Wisdom, tells those who are disciples of Truth; "The feelings of heat, cold, pleasure, pain, are produced from the contact of the senses with sense-objects; they are with beginning and end, transitory. Therefore, endure them bravely." To-day something strikes us with tremendous force and to-morrow it may not leave even a trace behind. Good fortune and ill fortune come. If we take either seriously, we must take both. In this dual world the only escape from life's tragic experiences is to have an even mind. If we allow ourselves to be carried away by one experience, we are bound to fall under the sway of another. That is why people break. They suffer extremes.

Poise means gaining tranquillity. Evenness of mind is a greater asset than all wealth or material power and it is unconditioned. Any one can acquire it. You may think that you are not equipped, that you did not start early enough. There is no time limit. It is a question of unfoldment. If you see it in the right light; if you make a point of contact with it, it is yours. There is no one who has any monopoly over it.

No one can either buy it or sell it. Deep down from within we unfold it; and when it is once unfolded, it is a power that we carry with us wherever we go. If we are thrown in the midst of trouble we have it as our companion, our guide, our safe-keeper. If we are thrown in the midst of a great crowd, we know how to maintain ourselves. It is individuals who give the living quality to these things. Individuals become great or they become helpless through their power of assimilation or their lack of it.

"With the heart serene and fearless, with a mind controlled and ever thinking of Me, let him sit steadfastly absorbed in thoughts of Me, regarding Me as his supreme goal." Serene-hearted and fearless—those are very beautiful thoughts that Sri Krishna gives us in the Bhagavad-Gita. Fearlessness is a quality of mind. So also is serenity. A person may seem calm and serene when everything goes according to plan, but his test comes when things happen contrary to his expectation. You may say, how can we help but feel it when things go wrong? But who has ever gained anything through anxiety or emotional excitement? Never a calamity befalls a person which is beyond his power of endurance. I do not give this merely as a consoling thought, but as an absolute conviction. Sometimes great tests come, but as soon as we take our stand and face them, our inward power increases. That is the reason why wise men sometimes think that obstacles are created to increase our strength and wisdom. Otherwise when we sit on the soft cushion of life very frequently we go to sleep. We even forget to think, we feel so comfortable and free from worry. By all means pray for comfort and prosperity if you so desire, but at the same time pray that you may have your inward resource open before you so that you may never become a burden to yourself or to another. More than that, pray that you may be able to aid others, for there is no

limit to our inward strength. Sometimes it is a very great misfortune when we have too much done for us in the outside world. As we become dependent on the material, we seek less and less from the spiritual and nothing can be more impoverishing to the individual than this.

We should always try to keep our inner eye open, because it is this which gives us a sense of freedom and power,—power that is not destructive, power that is not aggressive, power which makes us fearless and calm in all circumstances,—in storm, in danger, in calamity,—power which rises from the vivid realization that we are partakers of Divinity. This consciousness of spiritual presence that was in the heart of Christ, in the heart of Buddha, in the heart of St. Francis and other great Teachers, that same consciousness is also latent in us. Our daily task, in our waking, in our work and play, is to watch that we do not fill our mind and heart with alien thoughts. Thus we see how the theme of receptivity is expanded. We make ourselves receptive when we approach our ideal with openness of heart, with harmony of spirit, with a mind not already occupied. It is not every one who can receive. Many can hear, but few only receive. Our receptivity is wholly determined by our own mental attitude.

Steadfastness is a great virtue of mind. Without it we never can reach our ultimate goal. We need steadfastness not only in our spiritual pursuits, but in everything. Some people are staunch and loyal and they succeed. But nothing is ever altogether a misfortune. Even failure is a great teacher, just as great as success. Success and failure play equal parts in our unfoldment. This idea may shock some. But if we are open-hearted we learn even from adversity and bless those things which teach us and show us the way. Failure is a great antidote for ego. The ego always wants to take the place of the Lord. When we are really open to higher ideals we

find that nothing is altogether an evil. Forming the habit of relaxation at regular intervals during the day is not only efficacious spiritually, but we obtain marked physcial benefit through it. Periodical relaxation of the muscles saves our body and nervous system from unnecessary wear and tear and prevents premature ageing. Practice of relaxation of mind restores our tranquillity and gives us clear inner perception. Even when tense feelings and emotional agitations prevail in us, we can gain our balance and poise through this habit of relaxation.

Our whole life becomes transformed by the light of understanding, and the light of understanding can only come when we have evolved certain pure qualities within. Serenity of heart is such a quality. Can we imagine any one becoming spiritual who is full of inner turbulence? We cannot conceive of his gaining any real power or higher vision. It is not possible. Nor can he be a success in the material world because all is related. In order to become successful, efficient and helpful in material life, we need spiritual qualities. Material world and spiritual world,—these are fictitious creations of mind. In a higher sense there is nothing material and nothing spiritual. It is all one life with unbounded blessings. If we learn from every lesson of life, step by step, we ascend until we reach the ultimate goal for which we are all striving. When we do this consciously, we advance more quickly and find greater joy. No one wants to walk blindly. We like to feel and see the step we take. Doing this consciously and intelligently is the way to higher life.

It is difficult to conceive any one expressing high ideals through his life and thought whose mind is full of unrest. An unquiet heart can easily be compared with a stormy and cloudy sky, ever obscuring the face of the sun of Truth, filling our life with gloom. Under a fit of anger and emotional agi-

tation we can make ourselves susceptible to evil influences, but never can we receive spiritual blessings. Also we must bear in mind that merely remaining in a negative and passive state does not make us receptive for higher inspiration. It is only when our heart is free from all impurity, mind tranquil, and thoughts full of aspiration, that we are truly receptive. With receptive mind, tranquil body and undepressed heart, we become fit instruments to impart through our thoughts, words and deeds the unbounded blessings of life.

BE CONSTANT AND CHEERFUL

By Miguel de Molinos

(Spanish Mystic, 17th Century)

Thou art to know that thy soul is the centre, habitation and kingdom of God. That therefore, to the end the Sovereign King may rest on that throne of thy soul, thou oughtest to take pains to keep it clean, quiet, void and peaceable; clean from guilt and defects; quiet from fears; void of affections, desires and thoughts; and peaceable in temptations and tribulations.

Thou oughtest always then to keep thine heart in peace, that thou mayest keep pure that temple of God; and with a pure and right intention thou art to work, pray, obey and suffer, without being in the least moved, whatever it pleases the Lord to send unto thee. Because it is certain that for the good of the soul and for thy spiritual profit he will suffer the envious enemy to trouble that city of rest and throne of peace with temptations, suggestions and tribulations, and by the means of creatures with painful troubles and grievous persecutions.

Be constant and cheer up thine heart in whatsoever disquiet these tribulations may cause to thee. Enter within it, that thou mayest overcome it, for therein is the divine fortress which

defends, protects and fights for thee. If a man hath a safe fortress, he is not disquieted, though his enemies pursue him, because by retreating within, these are disappointed and overcome. The strong castle that will make thee triumph over all thine enemies, visible and invisible, and over all the snares and tribulations, is within thine own soul, because in it resides the divine aid and sovereign succor. Retreat within it, and all will be quiet, secure, peaceable and calm.

It ought to be thy chief and continual exercise to pacify that throne of thy heart, that the Supreme King may rest therein. The way to pacify it will be to enter into thyself by means of internal recollection; all thy protection is to be prayer and loving recollection of the divine Presence. When thou seest thyself more sharply assaulted, retreat into that region of peace, where thou wilt find the fortress. When thou art more faint-hearted, betake thyself to this refuge of prayer, the only armour for overcoming the enemy and mitigating tribulation. Thou oughtest not to be at a distance from it in a storm, to the end thou mayest, as another Noah, experience tranquillity, security and serenity; and to the end thy will may be resigned, devoted, peaceful and courageous.

Finally, be not afflicted nor discouraged to see thyself faint-hearted; He returns to quiet thee, that still He may stir thee, because this Divine Lord will be alone with thee to rest in thy soul and form therein a rich throne of peace; that within thine own heart, by means of internal recollection and with His heavenly grace, thou mayest look for silence in tumult, solitude in company, light in darkness, forgetfulness in pressures, vigor in despondency, courage in fear, resistance in temptation, peace in war, and quiet in tribulation.

A man contains all that is needful to his government within himself.—*Emerson.*

CONSCIENCE

From the Zend-Avesta

The soul is met after death at the Chinvat or Judge's Bridge by a figure of a woman, noble and in the flower of youth.

Soul: "What maiden art thou who art the most beautiful of maidens that ever I have seen?"

Maiden: "I am verily, O youth, thy conscience, thy good thoughts, and words, and deeds, thy very own."

Soul: "Who hath desired thee hither with his love, coming with thy majesty, thy goodness and thy beauty, triumphant and an enemy of grief?"

Maiden: "Thou hast loved me and desired me hither, O youth, even thy good thoughts, and words and deeds. Chanting the Gathas and sacrificing to the good waters and to Ahura Mazda's fire, contenting the righteous saint who came to thee from near and afar: it is thus that thou hast made me who am lovely, still more lovely, and me who am beautiful hast thou made still more beautiful, and thou hast made me who am beatified still more beatified . . . .through thy good thoughts, and words, and deeds."

The soul then passes on and comes before the golden throne where the good mind is seated.

Good Mind: "When didst thou come hither from that perishable world to this imperishable world?"

The Saints: "How long was thy salvation?"

Ahura Mazda: "Ask him not what thou askest of that cruel way which is the dividing of the soul and body."

Three steps then the soul advances into the threefold heaven. The first step brings him to the entrance of the heaven, the good thought; the second step leads him to the good word and the third step, to the good deed. Then the soul passes on content to the souls of the saints, to the golden throne of Ahura Mazda, to the golden throne of the bountiful immortals and to the abode of sublimity.

THE VIGIL

Book Reviews

(Instead of publishing a special review of "The Vigil" in the "Message" we believe it will interest our readers more to read some of the reviews by certain eminent critics which have appeared elsewhere. We are giving two below and others will follow later.)

"The Vigil" a little volume of poems, by Swami Paramananda, is an interesting collection of verse into which a classic beauty and chasteness of thought have been so interwoven that they strike a high spiritual note and lift one out of the ordinary plane of material things.

Mysticism in its truest form finds expression here, and a burning ardor for a more intimate knowledge of the Divine, and the soul yearning to see the face of the Mighty One, envelops its pages. These poems are said to fulfill the mystical ideals of both East and West, and this young Hindu poet has struck fire in even the smallest fragment of verse with his limpid honesty of mind. The opening poem, "The Vigil," from which the book takes its title, is particularly beautiful in its simplicity and serenity of style:

"In the glow of my sacred lamp
I caught a glimpse of Thy countenance
Which hath roused in me an all-
consuming longing to see Thee again.
I keep vigil—
My altar light burns day and night
with the hope of Thy coming.
I know in my inmost depth that no
mortal light can reveal Thy immortal face,
Thou art seen only in Thine own effulgence,
Yet with yearning hope in my heart,
I keep my little altar lamp
Day and night, burning—burning."

Those ambitious but somewhat misguided souls, who leap into verse writing with utmost abandon, would do well to study the technique and severe simplicity of this gifted new poet of India.—*Buffalo Courier, Buffalo, N. Y.*

That high note which Swami Paramananda reached in the poems contained in "Soul's Secret Door" is unfalteringly maintained in his latest collection of adulant verse, "The Vigil," which is an outpouring of the soul to its Maker, an acknowledgment of the Voice of the Infinite that has penetrated to the innermost recesses of the poet's being. Adoration is dominant in this spiritual efflorescence in which beauty of expression vies with reverential thought. There is no studied mysticism in these poems of worship; simple and direct, they flow from the heart of the utterer, evidencing his complete blending of self with the source of all joy. After much travail, this groper for peace has found his goal and in a passion of gratitude he prostrates himself at the feet of the Master. From the vigils he has kept has come a realization of the benign Presence. The poet confesses:

"I sailed on the wing of thought, crossing
many deep streams where my feet would
have sunk in weight,
But the wing of thought carried me to the
unwonted shores of life, where I found Thee,
And in Thee I found my rest.
Soul in search is never at rest.
Soul in slumber knoweth not the precious peace.
Soul in wakeful communion is at rest and
hath found its peace."

There is no striving after effect in this little volume; the songs are as sincere as they are spontaneous and inspirational. They are luminous with the great luster of divine love and reflect the flame of faith whose transcendent glow has permeated the poet's life. Only an understanding soul that has been relieved of all impurities could have voiced this intense love of the Divine, this merging of the finite will in that of the Infinite.—*Sam. T. Clover, in Los Angeles "Saturday Night," January* 26, 1924.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

Included in every Ashrama report for a long time to come will be the statement: The development work at the Ashrama goes steadily on. Only those who know the place and its magnitude can realize what that means,—the heavy brush that has to be cleared away, the stone walls that must be built, the vegetable and flower gardens waiting to be planned and planted, the pruning, the irrigation, the building, and always what has been done is as nothing compared to what lies ahead to do.

When over a hundred people were present at the Christmas Sunday Service, the first Service after Swami Paramananda's return from Boston, it seemed doubtful that that attendance would be maintained. The Ashrama seems so remote, although it is not really so, and it is so young and does so little advertising; but not only has the Sunday congregation held to the hundred mark, it has almost doubled it, each Sunday showing an increase. The motors begin to climb the hill by two o'clock and from then till nearly four there is a stream of cars. Many people come by street car or stage and are met by the Ashrama motors, and sometimes real pilgrims come on foot. Before the Service starts, they all walk through the gardens and up the trails or else stand enchanted on the edge of the natural platform gazing out over the misty valley. In spite of an almost unparalleled drought, the wild flowers are beginning to come out, the golden acacia is in full bloom and the flowering peach with its deep pink blossoms stands out against the blue sky like a Japanese flower arrangement. Again and again is heard the exclamation by some new-comer from the east: This is the most beautiful spot I have seen in California! In this mountain retreat friends from Boston or New York are almost as commonly met with as friends from Los Angeles. One old member from Boston is spending the winter at La Crescenta hotel in order to be close to the Ashrama. Other

newer members from the west are planning or actually building homes in or near La Crescenta with the same purpose . It is hoped that sometime at the Ashrama there will be a guest-house where people with earnest, yearning spirit can stay for a few weeks or months, but at present there is barely provision for the large group of consecrated workers.

On the second Sunday of February, the weather was so propitious that the Swami conducted the Service out of doors the first time this season. His subject was "Spiritual Healing" and healing seemed to be conveyed not only by his words but by the hills, the soft wind and the perfume of the flowers. One of the congregation remarked that the Service was like a benediction. Whenever the weather permits, Service will be out of doors.

For the past month the Swami has been holding a class on Thursday evening at 8 o'clock. It was originally intended more for the household than for outside members, as many people do not care to drive up into the hills at night; but this class also has been well attended and those who come find moonlight at the Ashrama even more enchanting than sunlight.

The newspapers have been universally kind in their comments. One church editor of a big Los Angeles paper writes: "Ananda-Ashrama or Blissful Peace Retreat, is the name of this Centre, situated well up in the Sierra Madre mountains. Swami Paramananda, a devout Hindu teacher, philosopher and poet, is its founder and leader. Not only from Los Angeles but from many beach cities motors find their way to this natural altar in the hills where the peace of nature seems to mingle with that of the Swami's teachings. Perhaps the universality of these teachings may be best expressed by the benediction which he chanted first in Sanskrit and then in English at the close of yesterday's Service: 'May He who is Father in Heaven of the Christians, Allah of the Mohamme-

dans, Jehovah of the Jews, Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians, Buddha of the Buddhists, Divine Mother and Infinite, all-abiding Spirit of the Indo-Aryans, grant unto us all His divine peace and blessing. May His peace and blessings be with us now and forevermore."

REPORT

During the month of January Swami Paramananda gave a course of lectures under the auspices of the Metaphysical Library of Los Angeles every Wednesday afternoon. His subject was Practical and Constructive Concentration. Week after week the lecture hall was crowded to its capacity, sometimes overflowing into the ante-rooms. Many people heard the Swami for the first time and are now coming faithfully to the Ashrama.

* * *

On the evening of January 27th the Swami addressed the Pasadena Lodge of the Theosophical Society on the subject of "Civilization and Spiritualization." In spite of the rain storm an unusually large number gathered to hear him. Many expressed their keen desire to have the Swami give regular lectures and classes in Pasadena. It is probable that this will take place in the near future.

* * *

Activities at The Vedanta Centre of Boston have been unfailingly maintained during Swami Paramananda's absence in the west by Miss Katharine Sherwood, who conducts Services every Sunday morning. Other devoted members help to keep the flame of faith and fervour burning. The first social evening on January 31st was given over to Mrs. Joseph Mahoney who entertained those who came with colored lantern slides of California, thus helping to dispel the sense of physical distance between the Swami's work in the east and in the west.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

MARCH, 1924

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

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ANANDA-ASHRAMA

Ananda-Ashrama (Peace Retreat) is an extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, established by Swami Paramananda in January, 1909. It is located in La Crescenta in the arms of the beautiful Sierra Madre Mountains at an altitude of 2,000 to 2,800 feet, only a short distance from the cities of Los Angeles, Pasadena and Glendale. This was procured by the Swami Paramananda at the outset of 1923 and on the last Sunday in April of the same year it was formally opened by the Swami "for the good of many and for the happiness of many".

The aim of the work is to provide a truly non-sectarian place of worship and to create an atmosphere and inspiration conducive to practical idealism. During the short time since its inception a great deal of development work has been accomplished and a great deal more will be done during the coming months. Plans are being made now for the chapel, auditorium, reading room, library, guest house, living quarters, landscape gardening, and out-of-door amphitheatre. In the meantime public services are held every Sunday afternoon at 3:30, and the Swami holds a study class for the earnest seekers after Truth every Thursday evening at eight o'clock. The Ashrama is open to visitors every day between 2 and 5 o'clock.

For further information please write to the secretary,
ANANDA-ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."—Tyndall.

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SELF-KNOWLEDGE

By Swami Paramananda

THERE is no real difference between God-knowledge and Self-knowledge, although apparently these two ideas seem to be at great variance. The familiar axiom of the Greek philosophers, "Know thyself"; the echo of the Vedic Upanishads, "Thou art That"; and the Christian injunction, "First seek the Kingdom of God"; all in their final analysis but lead us to the self-same goal of indivisible wholeness of life. The expression of the monist and the expression of the dualist are different, but the difference is not as radical and fundamental as we usually imagine it to be. At first glance the theme of Self-knowledge appears abstract, abstruse and merely a form of rationalistic speculation especially suited to the intellectual temperament of the philosopher. It is impossible, however, for us to inquire into the true entity of our being without making our contact with a supreme Source, whom the dualist calls the Godhead, Creator, his Master, the one who becomes his sole object of worship.

We are all connected innately with this great Source; but through strange distortion of world mirage we find ourselves separated from it, and the endeavour of the individual to re-relate himself takes two distinct methods. One

is to discover our true entity, travelling through the haze of material unrealities and non-essentials, exerting our high sense of discrimination and logic till through the process of elimination we once more connect ourselves with our origin and thus declare our true entity. This is what the sages call the knowledge of Self. The other method is when we realize our own helplessness and inability to face the overwhelming perplexities of life and turn to that supreme Source with whole-souled humility and yearning devotion, seeking His aid to deliver us from our bondage of iniquity. Whether this final goal is reached through selfless devotion and prayer, or through rationalistic discrimination and meditation, in both cases the lower self of man is superseded. As long as we are under the domination of our lower nature, it is impossible for us to grasp the magnitude of God-knowledge or Self-knowledge; because in both cases the selfish man must die, and after the death of the material man the real man ascends with all his spiritual grandeur.

No man can possess true knowledge of Self without knowing his relationship with Godhead, and again man cannot possess knowledge of God without knowing his own inherent worth. First of all, however, we must realize that Self-knowledge does not leave any room for egotism or aggressiveness. There are many who feel drawn to the monistic aspect of the spiritual teaching because it lays emphasis on the supremacy of Self; but it should not be confused at any time with the lower nature of man, which leads to smallness, pettiness and unworthy selfish feelings. Self-knowledge can never be used for any personal gratification. Otherwise it would prove to be a very dangerous doctrine. He who succeeds in rising to a sphere where the spirit of man breathes freely, where he realizes the great magni-

tude of universal life, not as Mr. or Mrs. So and So haunted by self-will and petty desires, but as a soul that has severed himself from all small boundary lines of self-limitation; such a man can never at any time stoop to personal gratification. Such a man then begins to radiate what every soul must radiate—the power of God, unbounded life. We are all born here with this great divine heritage to sustain us, to guide us, but we deliberately break ourselves from this beneficent Source and create our boundary lines, saying "This is my property and that is yours, and you must not trespass on mine." If a man tries to partition off the infinite sky, we say immediately that he has lost his reason, he is insane; yet that same insanity enters into our own soul through greed, selfishness and lower appetites. Through madness of passion and self-gratification we attach importance to that which is non-essential and lose sight of our great inward life. What part of us is real? What part of us is descended from the infinite Source? This is the cry of every true seeker and every true philosophy, and every man must be fully possessed of this knowledge.

As soon as we become aware of the fact, that we are no other than parts of the Infinite, that we are all descended from one Source, one Father, one Mother, then do we learn to take our place in this great universe worthily. We are not able to fulfill even our smaller duties until we realize this. We deprive ourselves more than others when we remain unillumined. Whenever we deliberately cheat some one, rob some one, or take undue advantage of some one, for our personal satisfaction, who is the loser? We ourselves. No intelligent being should take a chance with his spiritual evolution. We may imagine that it does not matter in the least whether or not we think of the higher

things now, so long as we pay heed to our immediate material needs, but we do not sustain the body by merely dwelling on our bodily interests. We may try to reverse the order, but we cannot reverse the results. The thing which is first must be given first place in life and no man has ever been able to prove to the contrary. Whenever we try to reverse the order and seek the kingdom of Truth last and to do all other things first, we go contrary to all true teaching, whether it be Christian, Hindu, Greek or Chinese. All truth-seers of the world and all true thinkers and lovers proclaim unanimously, "Know thyself first". A man cannot have knowledge of Self without having knowledge of God and humanity. These three principles work together. We cannot improve ourselves without improving the world. You may say, "I am not interested in humanity. I am primarily interested in my own welfare." Even from that view-point we need something other than mere thoughts of the material. It is not by thinking on matter that man becomes successful or healthy. In order to find our true expression even in the material world, we need light, light from the higher realm. For instance, we are interested in being healthy and happy; but wherefrom comes healthfulness and happiness, real strength and wisdom? Merely wanting these does not mean that we obtain them. We must earn them, and we cannot work for one thing and obtain another. We cannot plant on the soil of our life noxious seeds and obtain beautiful blossoms and sweet fruits. That is impossible.

Every man is capable of doing infinite good if he only turns his mind through the right channel. We are here to work in harmony, not to become rebels, but to make ourselves so absolutely in tune that our hands and feet, heart and mind and brain and all our faculties may work in co-

operation with the great universal force. Do we not carry that spark of life that has descended from the great infinite Source? But alas, some of us carry it quite unconsciously. In the great classics of India a parable is given of the donkey. Although he may carry a load of sandalwood on his back, he is only aware of the weight and not the merit of the sandalwood. Similarly there are many who carry a great load of learning, but their labor is indeed like that of the donkey—they are not conscious of the essence of their learning. We can all acquire book knowledge to a certain extent. We can become acquainted with science, art and philosophy; we can quote glibly from all the Bibles of the world; but if we have not assimilated their spirit, if we have not found our true expression through them and their expression through us, then we are indeed like the donkey. We carry a great load of life with us and it becomes a very arduous task.

No matter how we may seek, or what may be our immediate point of interest, none of us can be satisfied to stop at small ends. There is no one who wants to be a petty gainer. Our great thirst is for happiness and plenitude, but this thirst can never be quenched until we connect ourselves with the very Source of life. Every human being is reminded by his religion and also by his higher instinct that he is born of Divinity, yet how often we do not dare think of it. A strange dilemma takes possession of our mind, we are afraid to open our hearts before the great Light which heals and uplifts and restores. What can be the fear? Should a child ever fear to go to his mother even if he has done wrong? You do not want your child to tremble before you. The same is true with the infinite Father and infinite Mother. That all-loving Spirit would not have us tremble and hide our face from him in fear.

We hold ourselves aloof through our own calculation. Suppose through wrong calculation we have done something we should not have done. Can anything ever destroy the light of the sun? On the contrary the sun dispels all darkness. When the light of wisdom is kindled within us it is like a great fire. It utterly consumes all our ignorance and imperfection. This is why in India Self-knowledge is regarded as the highest possession of man. A man may have all other things, but if he lacks this, he lacks all. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Let us consider what Self-knowledge really means. Does the Self consist of our hands and feet, our brain and heart and muscles? Do these constitute that which the sages proclaim to be the undying principle in man? There is something besides these which makes the complete man, but unfortunately we do not try to see beyond the shackle of the gross part of our life. It is easy for us to recognize what is immediate and visible. The subtle principle very often goes unnoticed; and without the knowledge of this we must ever remain in ignorance, incomplete, and out of tune with the great cosmic principle. A story is told in the Upanishads that once two seekers went to a great teacher to be instructed and illumined. One of them was naturally full of lower instincts,—love of power, haughtiness, arrogance and selfishness; the other was of refined and spiritual nature. After a time of discipline the teacher proclaimed before both of them, "Thou art That". They both went home. The one with material instincts was greatly pleased to think that there was no one higher than himself, that he himself was the object of worship, and his philosophy became "myself first". The other was not satis-

fied. As he pondered and reflected within himself he knew that the words of the teacher were not to be taken literally; he felt that it was not his physical self that his teacher meant by saying, "Thou art That". So he went again and questioned the teacher, and again his teacher told him, "Thou art That, find That out for thyself".

You may wonder why it is that when some one comes with the desire to know the Truth he is told, "Find out for thyself". But can we ever give knowledge to another until he is ready for it? Suppose you have an invention a little bit out of the ordinary and you try to convince your friends of its worth, they will only laugh at you. If this is true in the material world, how much more true is it in the spiritual world. All that the great masters and teachers can do is to give us stimulus, to hold before us a picture. But we must paint our own picture. No one can ever force another in religion or in any form of wisdom. What the teacher did was to stimulate the mind of the disciple. Again he went away and reflected on the nature of the Self. It was not the body, neither could it be the restless mind. Thus he reasoned, discarding that which was only material, reaching gradually into the subtler and subtler realms of life, until there dawned in his soul realization of That within him which is boundless, diseaseless and deathless.

Man is like two entities, like a double being. There is the "eating, drinking, sleeping man", as Emerson calls him, aware of his appetites, aware of his limitations and needs, and there is the man that is beyond all these. So long as we remain absolutely confined to the lower aspect of our life, we have no opportunity for self-expression. We feel like slaves; but every one has the privilege of transcending this condition; and we transcend it, not by belonging to a creed or professing a dogma, but through the higher ex-

pression of life. If we are convinced that there is a soul, then we must have some knowledge of it, and not merely indulge ourselves in bodily realities.

We are all conscious of our physical existence. Some are too conscious of it. When our soul becomes of foremost importance, when we give it first place in our life, then do we find co-operation between matter and spirit, between body and soul. The combination of these two makes a perfect man. It enables us to bring richer blessings first upon ourselves and then upon others. For no man can be truly conscious of his higher life without contributing some tangible benefit to his fellow-beings. Knowledge of the soul is like a brilliant light, not only does it reveal our own course, not only does it remove our own perplexities, but it illumines the path of others. That is the reason why the great teachers have said, "Let your light shine". We cannot possess the light without letting it throw its glow.

It is strength that overcomes weakness; it is light that overcomes darkness; it is wisdom that overcomes ignorance. That is the eternal law. Whenever you are downcast make an effort to connect yourself with that eternal light. The nature of light is to dispel all gloom. Instead of brooding over your misfortunes, strive to make this contact with your higher resources. Whenever you see some one who has fallen down with broken spirit, try to throw your light upon his path, seek to inspire him with your love. If you can once rekindle in his soul his lost faith, if you can restore unto him his knowledge, he will no longer find his life intolerable. We cannot help but do this to our fellow-beings naturally, if we have Self-knowledge. When a man becomes possessed of his higher Self, not possessed by egotism, not possessed by selfishness or weakness, not possessed by the vanities of this world, but possessed of the

true Light, he becomes incapable of doing anything ignoble or selfish. The man who carries the light may not be aware that he is doing any service to others, but he does nevertheless shed light upon their path. His very existence becomes a blessing. We cannot be full of light without throwing it upon the path of other men and women. We cannot be happy without making others happy.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

God is in all men but all men are not in God: that is the reason why they suffer.

Unshod and with bare feet who will venture to walk upon thorns and sharp stones? Shod with divine wisdom what thorn or sharp stone can harm you?

If you first smear the palms of your hands with oil and then break open the jack-fruit, the sticky milky exudation of the fruit will not stick to the hands. So if you first fortify yourself with the true knowledge of the universal Self and then live in the midst of the world, it will not affect you in any way.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

Discern form from substance, O son, as lion from desert. When thou seest the waves of speech, know that there is an ocean beneath them. Every moment the world and we are renewed. Life is like a stream renewed and ever renewed. —*Jalal-u-din-Rumi.*

It is not the knowledge of a thing, but the doing of it that is difficult. Be studious, of humble intentions and try to maintain timely effort.—*Yueh in Shu King.*

Of light my buckler I did make
And for lance the darkness take:
In balanced quiet my mind abode,
And then upon my way I rode.

Jacopone da Todi.

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.—*Revelation.*

From inwardness is born a sensible love which penetrates the heart of man and the highest faculties of the soul. This love and delight none can experience who has not inwardness. Sensible love is the desire and appetite for God as for an eternal good in which all is contained. Sensible love renounces all the creatures. Interior love feels itself touched from above by the eternal love which it must practise eternally. Interior love willingly renounces and despises everything in order to obtain that which it loves.

From this sensible love is born devotion to God and His glory. For none can have a hungry devotion in his heart unless he possesses the sensible love of God. Devotion exacts and stimulates a man internally and externally to the service of God. It makes the body and soul abound in glory and merit in the eye of God and men. God exacts devotion in all that we do. It purges the body and soul from all that might hold us back: it shows us the true path to blessedness.—*Ruysbroek.*

The wise, who by means of the highest meditation on the Self knows the Ancient One, difficult to perceive, seated in the innermost recess, hidden in the cave of the heart, dwelling in the depth of inner being, (he who knows that One) as God, is liberated from the fetters of joy and sorrow.

The Self is subtler than the subtle, greater than the great; It dwells in the heart of each living being. He who is free from desire and free from grief, with mind and senses tranquil, beholds the glory of the *Atman.*

The wise who know the Self, bodiless, seated within perishable bodies, great and all-pervading, grieve not.—*Katha Upanishad.*

REVELATIONS

Of Mother Juliana, Anchoress of Norwich—14th Century

It is ready to us, and more easy, to come to the knowing of God, than to know our own soul. For our soul is so deep grounded in God and so endlessly treasured, that we may not come to the knowing thereof, till we have first knowing of God; which is the Maker to whom it is oned. God is more nearer to us than our own soul; for he is ground in whom our soul standeth: for our soul sitteth in God in very rest, and our soul standeth in God in sure strength: and our soul is kindly rooted in God in endless love. And therefore if we will have knowing of our soul, and commoning, and daliance therewith, it behooveth to seek into our Lord God, in whom it is inclosed. And surely I saw, that into this high deepness our good Lord himself leadeth us in the same love that he made us. . . .

And so hath all thing its being through the love of God. In each little thing I saw three parts: the first is that God made it; the second is that He loves it; the third is that God keeps it.

But what is that to me? Truly that He is the Maker, the Lover, the Keeper; for till I am substantially oned to Him, I may never have love, rest, nor true bliss; that is to say, that I be so fastened to Him that there be right nought that is made betwixt my God and me. And who shall do this deed? Truly He Himself by His mercy and His grace, for He has made me thereto, and blissfully restored me. And therefore I pray you all for God's sake, and counsel you for your own profit, that ye leave the beholding of the wretched, worldly, sinful creature—and that ye mightily, wisely, lovingly and meekly, behold God, that of His courteous love and of His endless goodness, would show to all alike this vision to comfort us all.

THE PATH OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

From the Mahabharata

(The Mahabharata or "Great India" is one of the two great Sacred Epics of India, and is supposed to have been composed about 1400 B. C. It contains 220 thousand lines.)

Truth constitutes the essence of the Vedas, control over passions constitutes the essence of Truth, and self-denial forms the essence of self-control. These attributes are always present in a spiritual character. The subjugation of the senses is the highest means of obtaining spiritual advancement. By indulging them, a person contracts vices; and by bringing them under control, he attains freedom.

There should be no wrong over wrong, rather one should deal honestly. The sinful person who desires to commit a crime is slain by himself. One should do away with falsehood. One should render good to all unasked. One should never forsake virtue out of lust, anger or malice. Those who are virtuous, who practise self-denial, speak the truth, and follow the instructions of their spiritual teachers, obtain the highest wisdom.

These three are reckoned to constitute the highest way of the virtuous, namely, a man must not offend any one, he must be charitable, and he must speak the truth always. Those who are kind on all occasions and who are filled with compassion, obtain the greatest contentment and ascend the highest path of virtue, and their acquisition of virtue is most certain.

The wise man delights in virtue and lives by virtue. Such a man with the wealth of virtue which he thus acquires, waters the root of the plant (righteousness) in which he finds most virtue. The virtuous man thus acts and his mind becomes serene. Those who are freed from sin, who are wise, forbearing and self-controlled, enjoy continual bliss in this world and in the next world.

CHILDREN OF LIGHT

By Swami Paramananda

Children of Light, walk in the light;
Let all darkness vanish from your path!
Children of Light, let your face shine
with love and joy!
Dark night of the soul is an illusion of mind.
Doubt of your divine right will melt
before the sun of Truth that will
dawn in your heart.
Children of Light, dwell in the light!
Think of the light and live with the light!
Let your life be a perpetual light:
Your words will scatter sparks of wisdom;
Your glance of love will penetrate
desolate hearts;
Your song of bliss will rouse all down-
cast spirits.
In hour of meditation your thoughts will
shine like the bright stars,
Illumining the firmament of the spiritual
world.
Children of Light, walk in the light!
Let all darkness vanish from your path!

If a man is unhappy, remember that his unhappiness is his own fault, for God made all men to be happy.—*Epictetus.*

He is happy whose circumstances suit his temper: but he is more excellent who can suit his temper to any circumstances.—*Hume.*

PRAYER

By St. John of the Cross—16th Century

O Lord God, my Love, who can free himself from base and mean ways, if Thou, O my God, wilt not lift him up to Thee in pure love? Thou hastenest joyfully and lovingly, O Lord, to raise up him who has offended Thee, but I make no haste to honour and raise him up who has offended me. How shall a man raise himself up to Thee, for he is born and bred in misery, if Thou wilt not lift him up with the hand that made him? O Lord Almighty, if the shadow of the power of Thy justice in earthly sovereigns who govern and rule the nations can do so much, what cannot Thy almighty justice do, dealing with the just man and the sinner?

O Lord my God, Thou art not estranged from him who does not estrange himself from Thee. How is it that men say Thou art absent? O Lord my God, who is there that seeks Thee in pure and true love, who does not find Thee to be the joy of His will? It is Thou who art the first to show Thyself, going forth to meet those who desire to meet Thee. Thou wilt not take away from me, O my God, what Thou hast once given me in Thy only begotten Son Jesus Christ, in Whom Thou hast given me what I desire. I will therefore rejoice, Thou wilt not tarry if I wait for Thee. Wait in hope then, O my soul, for from henceforth thou mayest love God in thy heart.

O sweetest love of God, too little known; he who has found Thee is at rest; let everything change, O my God, that we may rest in Thee. Everywhere with Thee, O my God, everywhere all things with Thee as I wish. O my Love, all for Thee, nothing for me: nothing for Thee, everything for me. All sweetness and delight for Thee, none for me: all bitterness and trouble for me, none for Thee. O my God,

how sweet to me Thy presence, who art the sovereign Good. I will draw near to Thee in silence, and will uncover Thy Feet, that it may please Thee to unite me to Thyself, making my soul Thy bride: I will rejoice in nothing till I am in Thine arms. O Lord, I beseech Thee, leave me not for a moment, because I know not the value of my soul.

THE PASSING OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Told by His disciple Swami Ramakrishnananda

When Sri Ramakrishna gave up His body did He feel any pain? On the contrary I think that was the most blissful moment of His life, for there was horripilation all over His body. I myself saw it. Every hair stood up on end. He never really felt much pain. He never lost His cheerfulness. He used to say that He was all well and happy, only there was a little something here (pointing to the throat).

On that last night He was talking with us to the very last. For supper He had drunk a whole half glass of *paysam* (gruel) and seemed to relish it. There was no doubt a little heat in the body, so He asked us to fan Him and some ten of us were all fanning at once. He was sitting up against some five or six pillows which were supported by my body and at the same time I too was fanning. This made a slight motion in the body and twice He asked me: "Why are you shaking?" As if His mind were so fixed and steady that He could perceive the least motion. Swamiji Vivekananda took His feet and began to rub them and Sri Ramakrishna was talking to him, telling what he must do. "Take care of these boys", He repeated again and again, as if He were putting them in his charge. Then He asked to lie down. Suddenly at one o'clock He fell towards one side, there was a hoarse sound in the throat and I saw all the hairs stand on end. Swamiji quickly laid His feet on a

quilt and ran downstairs as if he could not bear it. A doctor, who was a great devotee and who was feeling His pulse, saw that it had stopped and began to weep aloud. "What are you doing, you fool?" I asked, meaning that he was acting as if Sri Ramakrishna had really left us. We all believed that it was only *Samadhi,* so Swamiji came back, and we all sat down, some twenty of us, and began repeating, "Hari Om! Hari Om!" all together. So we waited until between one or two the next day. Still the body had some heat in it, especially about the back, but the doctor insisted that the soul had left the body and about five it had grown cold, so we placed it on a very beautifully decorated cot and carried it to the cremation ground.

I remember every incident of that last day. He seemed very well and cheerful. In the afternoon He talked for fully two hours to a gentleman who had come to put Him some questions about Yoga. A little later I ran some seven miles to bring the doctor. When I reached his house, he was not there, but I was told that he was at a certain house. So I ran another mile and I met him on the way. He did not want to come but I dragged him away just the same. He gave Sri Ramakrishna some medicine saying: "I am sure this will cure you", and Sri Ramakrishna scolded His Mother a little saying, "How long shall I have to take this Ushistam?"

We all thought He was very well because He ate so much more supper than usual, and He said nothing of going. In the afternoon He had asked Yogin to look in the almanac and see whether it was an auspicious day and Yogin said that it was a very auspicious day. Also He had been telling us for some time that the vessel which was floating in the ocean was already two-thirds full of water, soon the rest would fill up and it would plunge into the ocean. But we did not believe that He was really going.

A CONSECRATED LIFE

By Marion Forster Gilmore

Your soul has been to me an altar flame
Since the first hour it shone upon my life.
Its starry light still gleams upon my way
And makes it clearer; distance cannot dim
Nor time obscure so pure a radiance.
And when I think of you I always see
Your fervent spirit as a lucent fire,
Upward aspiring, steadfast, beautiful,
Burning upon that altar you have raised,
The altar of your consecrated life.

THREE NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS

By Mahatma Gandhi

Just as it is necessary for the labourers to develop their minds by receiving education and to educate their children, so it is necessary to develop the moral faculty in them. Development of the moral faculty means that of the religious sense. The world does not quarrel with those who have a true faith in God and who understand the true nature of religion. And if it does, such men turn away the wrath of their adversaries by their gentleness. Religion here does not mean merely offering one's *namaz* (prayers) or going to the temple. But it means knowledge of one's self and knowledge of God, and just as a person does not become a weaver unless he knows the art of weaving, so does he fail to know himself unless he complies with certain rules. Chief amongst these are three that are of universal observance. The first is observance of Truth. He who does not know what it is to speak the truth is like a false coin, valueless. The second is not to injure others. He who injures others, is jealous of others, is not fit to live

in the world. For the world is at war with him, and he has to live in perpetual fear of the world. We all are bound by the tie of love. There is in everything a centripetal force without which nothing could have existed. Scientists tell us that without the presence of the cohesive force amongst the atoms that comprise this globe of ours, it would crumble to pieces and we would cease to exist, and even as there is cohesive force in blind matter, so much must there be in all things animate and the name for that cohesive force among animate beings is Love. We notice it between father and son, between brother and sister, friend and friend. But we have to learn to use that force among all that lives, and in the use of it consists our knowledge of God. Where there is love there is life; hatred leads to destruction. . . . The third rule is that we have to conquer our passions. It is called *Brahmacharya* in Sanskrit. I do not use it here merely in its accepted narrow sense. He is not a *Brahmachari,* who, although he may be a celibate or may be living a chaste life as a married man, otherwise gives himself up to a variety of indulgences. He alone is capable of knowing himself who brings under complete subjection all his passions. He who exercises self-restraint in its widest sense is also a *Brahmachari*—a man of faith, a true Hindu or a true Mahommedan.

It is a breach of *Bramacharya* to hear questionable languages or obscene songs. It is licentiousness of the tongue to utter foul abuse instead of reciting the name of God, and so with the other senses. He alone can be considered the true man who having subjected his passions becomes perfectly self-restrained. We are like a rider who cannot keep his horse under control and is quickly brought down. But one who drawing in the reins keeps the animal under subjection stands a fair chance of reaching his destination.

Even so does a man who can control his passions make for the goal. He alone is fit for *swarajya*. He alone is a seeker after truth. He alone becomes capable of knowing God. It is my earnest wish that you will not reject these remarks as if they were copybook maxims. I ask you to believe that we shall never go forward until we have learnt the value of observing these truths. What I have told you is a fragment of my own experiences. My service of you is due simply to my love for you and I partake of your sorrows, because I hope thereby to justify myself before my Maker. (From "Young India.")

HIGH AND LOW

By Philostratus

(From the Life of Apollonius of Tyana.—First century B. C.)

When they were crossing the great mountains into India a conversation is said to have taken place between Apollonius and Damis. The question was concerning the "below" and "above".

"Yesterday", said Damis, "we were 'below' in the valley; to-day we are 'above', high on the mountains, not far distant from heaven."

"So this is what you mean by 'below' and 'above'," said Apollonius gently.

"Why, of couse," impatiently retorted Damis. "If I am in my right mind, what need of such useless questions?"

"And have you acquired a greater knowledge of the divine nature by being nearer heaven on the tops of the mountains?" continued his master. "Do you think that those who observe the heavens from the mountain heights are any nearer the understanding of things?"

"Truth to tell," replied Damis, somewhat crestfallen, "I did think I should come down wiser, for I've been up a

higher mountain than any of them, but I fear I know no more than before I ascended it."

"Nor do other men," replied Apollonius; "such observations make them see the heavens more blue, the stars more large, and the sun rise from the nights, things known to those who tend the sheep and goats; but how God doth take thought for human kind, and how He doth find pleasure in their service, and what is virtue, righteousness, and common sense, that neither Athos will reveal to those who scale his summit, nor yet Olympus who stirs the poet's wonder, unless it be the soul perceive them; for should the soul when pure and unalloyed essay such heights, I swear to thee, she wings her flight far, far beyond this lofty Caucasus."

THE DREAM OF THE ASHRAMA

One year ago this March in the late afternoon when hill and valley lay under the spell of the evening shadows, Swami Paramananda stood for the first time upon the platform of Ananda-Ashrama and knew that his long trip across the continent had not been in vain. Led by an inner urge, he had come to find a Peace Retreat in the mountains of California, and here on this spot enfolded by mountains, with the valley of the world at his feet, he had found it.

That was the beginning. In the months that have followed there have been all the effort and struggle incident to the bringing of a great vision into actual, physical being. There have been hours of discouragement when the workers were few and the task almost overpowering. But the fire of consecration ultimately burns up all obstacles and that fire is burning at the heart of Ananda-Ashrama. Development has sometimes seemed slow to those who have watched day by day, but to others who saw the place at the beginning and who see it now, a miracle seems to have been accom-

plished. One year ago Ananda-Ashrama was a dream in Swami Paramananda's mind; to-day it is still a dream, but a dream that hundreds are sharing. One year ago the Fusenot place with its canyons lay quiet and unknown under the sun and the stars; to-day it is a Peace Retreat towards which countless hearts are turning,—a place of pilgrimage that is drawing men and women from all over the land.

It is well at an anniversary to review one's ideal, to focus one's inner gaze anew upon one's goal. A lady to whom the Swami had shown the Ashrama, was asked her impression of it. "It was most beautiful", she replied, "but more beautiful to me was the Swami's vision of it". What is the Swami's vision of the Ashrama? Right at the beginning he stated that it was to be "for the good of many and the happiness of many"; and only the other day as he sat before the open fire in the big living-room, he enlarged upon his vision. He spoke of the tendency of all religious movements to crystallize around some great figure, to become exclusive, narrow and egotistic. Ananda-Ashrama, he prayed with his whole heart, would never shrink into a sect, but would be for men of all creeds a spiritual centre, based upon a realization of the one supreme Spirit which lies back of all, which binds all, which unites all and which is the goal of all paths and all faiths. This inclusiveness and universality,—not merely talked about but lived,—was the very essence of Sri Ramakrishna's message. It was a flaming ideal in the heart of Swami Vivekananda, who abhorred all that was restricted or creed-bound. There was no better way, the Swami felt, to repay the infinite debt he owed to these and to other mighty souls, than to help to bring about a fulfillment of this ideal at the Ashrama. On Friday, March 6th, the members of the Ashrama conse-

crated themselves anew to this spirit of universal love and tolerance at a special Service held in honor of the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna who exemplified in his life, the ideals of every great religion; who was looked upon by men of every denomination as a perfect example of their particular faith.

It is a tremendous work that lies ahead of the Swami and his associates. Only those who understand what it means both to develop a large property and to unite many lives in harmony can appreciate what has been undertaken. No one in the worldly life would think of attempting it without a large endowment. A large endowment the Swami has, but not as the world understands it, not of material riches, it is as he has told us, an endowment of faith, of spiritual strength, of inner sustenance. This has never failed him; it will yet bring about the realization of his dream. "With many arms dost Thou shield me; with many hearts dost Thou love me; with many minds dost Thou guide me to the road of safety". These are lines from one of the Swami's recent poems. With many arms, with many hearts, with many minds is the one eternal Mother shielding, loving and guiding the work of the Ashrama. The past year has broken the ground and planted the seed; the coming year will see the first green of the harvest.—*Daya.*

On Wednesday, March 12th, the La Crescenta Woman's Club had the Swami as its honored guest. He spoke on "The Great Culture of India". Many friends were present as well as residents in the valley who had never been to the Ashrama or heard the Swami. There was nothing but warm appreciation and enthusiasm expressed, more than one comparing the Swami's message to a fresh breeze, blowing away with its pure strong breath all prejudice and misunderstanding.

THE VIGIL

Book Reviews

I am Thy soil,
Thou art my seed.
I am Thy body,
Thou art my soul.

By such all embracing devotion to the Deity is "The Vigil" of this devout Hindu inspired. When Swami Paramananda's earlier volume, "Soul's Secret Door", was published, no one who read it failed to recognize its sincerity, its beauty, its surpassing calm. The present book, it seems to me, is even a higher accomplishment. It has carried the splendid growth of the earlier verse to a more splendid fruition.

It is amazing what this Oriental writer can do with vers libre. Would that our own professional writers of free verse could come within miles of him; but, perhaps, that is too much to expect, for Swami Paramananda has a message! We are better for listening to it.

What a great Christian he is, in spite of the fact that his religion is of the Orient; another surety that God is God, no matter what men of different races call him or in what language prayers ascend! How good a thing it would be for America if all our professed ministers of Christ could write simply and sincerely, as this servant of God has done:

Fear not, my heart, even the darkest night must end at dawn!
Clouds and mist may come and go,
But they cannot rob sun's radiant glow,
Look up, mine eyes, keep steady watch,
For never must ye lose your guiding star.
Hold fast! Hold fast!
Faith and courage are His tender blessings;
He will not hold these from thee when he sees thy yearning, struggling soul.
Rest will come when thy toil is done.

John Wellington La Rue, Enquirer, Cincinnati, O.

"The Vigil", poems by Swami Paramananda.—This

present volume is dedicated to the same class of inspiring spiritual poetry as the collection of poems published by the same author under the title "Soul's Secret Door". It is the same in its simplicity, written in attractive and powerful language, presenting the same wealth of beautiful pictures and images, but above all that chaste poetry which commands the respect even of the scoffer. "The Vigil" forms, in a measure, a continuation of "Soul's Secret Door", exhaling the same genuine poetical fragrance. The poems which appear under this title testify not only to the profound poetical talent, but above all to the deeply religious spirit of the author, revealing also a thorough understanding of human failings. The Swami has intimate knowledge of the wisdom and philosophy of Occident and Orient and writes a classical English.—*Translation—Westliche Post, St. Louis, Mo.*

Until a volume of this kind falls into the hands of the poetry lover, he does not realize the extent of warm reality which most of to-day's verse has reached. Along that highway which is full of the stir and crash of Kipling, the splendid, brutal quality of Masefield, and myriad, poignant, careless colors of Noyes, this reposeful, white gleam is at least amazing. Here is no contact with the physical, in any sense of the word. Its strain is purely spiritual with no suggestion of that quality as glimpsed in man, but only as it is felt in a soul that has become sensitive to the real in unrealities.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

APRIL, 1924

SPIRITUAL ASCENSION

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.
Published monthly except in August and September

VOL. XIII APRIL, 1924 No. 4

EASTER HYMN

By Swami Paramananda

LET all souls awake within
their house of clay
With new life emanating
warmth of love and
might of peace.
Let all mortals rise to-day and
tune their hearts to sing
immortal song.
Let all souls ascend to the
deathless plane.
Behold the saving light dis-
pelling darkness!
Let all mortals rise to-day and
inherit their immortal state.
Let all mortals, forsaking sleep
of doubt, ascend with the
glory of dawn.
What is claimed by death will
never rise
And thy soul ascended now will
never die.

(Written especially for Easter at Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, Calif.)

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

There is One Unknown Being, prior to all beings, and exalted above all. He is the Author of all things, even of the ethereal sphere, and of all things below it. He is Life, Counsel and Light,—which three names all signify one Power; the same that drew all things, visible and invisible, out of nothing. We will sing that eternal, wise, all-perfect love, which brought order out of chaos.—*Orpheus.*

As the sun is the cause of the eyesight of every being, yet is not made defective by the defect in any eye, even so the divine Self of all is not affected by the miseries of the body or by any misery that is round about.—*Upanishads.*

Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.—*Psalms.*

In water there exists air, and in air water; yet are these elements distinct. Meditate therefore on the mysterious affinity between God and the soul.

Even as you see your countenance reflected in a mirror or your shadow in the still water, so behold the Lord in your minds because He is with all.

He that formed the mind, made it as it were a temple for himself to dwell in; for God liveth in the mind and nothing but God.—*Dadu.*

The longer one travels towards the city he seeks, the nearer and nearer he comes to the goal of his journey; exactly so is it with the soul that is seeking God. If he will travel away from himself and away from the world and seek only God as the precious pearl of his soul, he will come steadily nearer to God until he becomes one spirit with God the Spirit; but let him not be afraid of mountains

and valleys on the way, and let him not give up because he is tired and weary, for he who seeks finds. Man must seek, find and know God through an interrelation—he must find God in himself and himself in God.—*Sebastian Franck, German spiritual reformer, 16th century.*

How that presence is felt may better be known by experience than by any writing, for it is the life and the love, the might and the light, the joy and the rest of a chosen soul. And therefore he that hath once truly felt it cannot forbear it without pain, neither can he choose but desire it, it is so good in itself and so comfortable. . . . He cometh secretly sometimes when thou art least aware of Him, but thou shalt know Him full well ere He go; for He wonderfully stirreth and mightily turneth thy heart into the beholding of His goodness, and then doth thy heart melt delectably as wax against the fire into softness of His love.—*Walter Hilton.*

Riches without God are the greatest poverty and misery.—*Ali.*

The nobler kind of man is anxious to see clearly, to hear distinctly, to be kindly in his looks, respectful in his demeanor, conscientious in speech, earnest in his affairs; when in doubt he is careful to enquire, when in anger, he thinks of the consequences; when offered an opportunity for gain, he thinks only of his duty.—*Confucius.*

He who has made the pilgrimage of his own spirit, a pilgrimage in which there is no concern respecting situation, place or time, which is everywhere; in which neither cold nor heat is experienced, which bestows perpetual happiness and freedom from sorrow; he is without action, knows all things, pervades all things and obtains eternal beatitude.—*Atmana Bodha.*

SPIRITUAL ASCENSION

By Swami Paramananda

(Easter address delivered at the Vedanta Centre of Boston)

"Sword cannot pierce it, fire cannot burn it, water cannot wet it, air cannot dry it. It cannot be pierced, nor burned, nor wet, nor dried. It is eternal, all-pervading, unchangeable, immovable, everlasting. It is never destroyed even when the body is destroyed." This song of the soul at first falls upon our ears strange and unfamiliar, as if from another world; and because of this we doubt its reality. We cannot help but doubt since it seems directly to contradict the evidence of our senses. Do we not witness disease, death and devastation every hour before our very eyes? How then can we help but doubt when some one comes with a contrary message saying the spirit of man is deathless? That was the message which Christ brought to the world, and because it was so unfamiliar, people did not listen to Him. Not only did they not listen to Him, they thought that this man was an impostor, an inventor of lies; therefore the only thing to do was to get rid of Him. But the world cannot get rid of Truth. Thousands of times Truth may be crucified and condemned, yet always it springs forth again. It rises up and always must it rise up, because it is self-existent.

Ascension means spiritual ascension. It means that now, before we depart from the body, we rise from the burial ground of matter. There are many who try to console us with the materialistic notion that after we are dead and gone there will come a day of judgment, when we shall all rise in the flesh with the same hands, the same feet, the same eyes. But perhaps we may not want the same things. The body wears out. Spirit is never worn out. In fact Spirit unfolds itself. All that it wants is a larger atmos-

phere and greater opportunities to bring forth its inherent power.

What religion we pretend to profess makes little difference if we are bound hand and foot by matter. Religion is not a question of pretence. It means a great deal more than that; it means more than subscribing to a faith or a creed. Religion means convincing ourselves in regard to the reality of Spirit. No one else can convince us. Even Christ cannot convince us. In spite of His ascension, in spite of His deathlessness, the truth of immortality will have no meaning for the individual unless it has already dawned in his own soul. He will only be able to give a material interpretation of it. We do not enrich our life by clinging to material things, but when we have a higher concept which is a vivid, glowing fact in our life, we are able to utilize every part of our material blessings. It is not a question of condemning the world. A man disgusted with bodily life is not going to inherit immortality by committing suicide. That will not bring it to him. If he is bound here, he will be bound still, even after casting off the shackle of the body. It is now that we must free ourselves. If we go out with a free spirit, we shall be free. Because we are free now, we shall be free then.

Ascension is a very symbolic expression of life. Nature constantly shows us that we must redeem ourselves. Look at the spring! Does it not redeem winter's devastation? Does it not revive the trees? Does it not bring new life everywhere? This Feast of Easter is symbolic of the ascension of life, of the reviving of all living things. We need to remind ourselves of this, not only on Easter day but on all days; because it is only as we rise up with the Spirit that we begin to live. When we fill ourselves with the spirit of life we always counteract that which is the oppo-

site of life. You may think that these things are not practical. What is practical? Man from his viewpoint of utility, thinks the only practical things are those which bring him physical plenitude—food and clothes for his body, and the fulfillment of a few desires. Perhaps these things are practical; if they are, let us make them more practical, more lasting. Let us make their influence more far-reaching by adding to them one element which is tremendously lacking in our life: that is, spiritual consciousness.

Whether we belong to Christianity or to any other faith makes no difference. The heart of religion is one and the same; and when that heart-beat is felt in our own heart, then do we realize its living and vivid quality. Without this realization whatever we profess is a blank. It is just here that we fail; but if we have the feeling that we possess a soul, then we can go out into the world, into any department of it, and meet whatever difficulties may confront us,—opposition, adversities, dangers just as Christ did. We can face death even with unwavering faith. Faith in what? Faith in the fundamental part of life. We cannot live, we can only pretend living, unless we have that faith. When it is born within us, then our life takes on a new tone. That is the awakening of a new life; that is the real ascension.

We breathe unconsciously; and these things which we call unpractical, we find are as easy to live and as simple as breathing. The thoughts which I am giving you may seem but mere fancies of the poet, dreams of the philosopher; but they are real. They are just as real in the spiritual realm as are the things we see here before us. Anything we can see, we do not doubt. When you sit before me, I know you are sitting there; no one can make me doubt that. You do not doubt my existence when I am speaking to you. In the same way we contact higher things directly

and definitely. When we make this direct contact there is no room left for doubt and delusion. This is the vitally important thing in our life. This is what gives us upliftment, the power to rise and to stand above the burial-ground of matter. Ascension means that to me. Ascension in the spiritual sense means that we rise above bondage, above the clouds which hide our vision. The small storms of delusion vanish; the sun has dispelled them, the sun of wisdom.

When we doubt spiritual realities, even for a moment, we are depressed. We feel doubt in regard to ourself, doubt in regard to others, and doubt in regard to the very foundation of life,—Truth and God. What is the remedy for this doubt? How may we dispel this darkness? There is only one remedy for all darkness and doubt,—spiritual light. Anything that will add to our spiritual strength; anything, no matter how small, that will sustain us; we should work for that, we should grasp that, so that we may rise up and remain erect in our spiritual vision.

The celebration of Easter is a beautiful, helpful custom. It is springtime—nature is renewed, so we come out in a new dress, new everything. But a Feast is never complete without the understanding of its spiritual significance. We cannot enter into the spirit of Easter merely by adorning ourselves with new garments. We must be spiritually renewed; we must have a fresh sense of life . How can we have it? We have it when we realize the invincible quality of the soul. Often we hear people say that the greatest testimony for Christ as a Saviour was His ascension. True! It is the testimony given by all great souls, all Saviours and spiritual Redeemers. When we overcome death by knowledge, when we ascend from the burial-ground of matter, that is the real testimony of Truth. Through it we testify to the indestructibility of the soul.

Some one once asked a great mystic sage in India how it was possible for Christ to endure so much pain on the cross. In a flash the sage gave this parable. He said: You have seen how in the dried cocoanut the outer shell and the kernel are separate. If you shake it you hear it move inside. The soul of Christ was just like this, separated from the shell of the body. But in the green cocoanut, the shell, the kernel and the fibre are all connected, so if you pierce it the whole thing is pierced. Thus the ordinary mortal feels the pain, feels the deception, feels the impotence of this body; and whatever crushes the body seems to crush the soul. To him there is no difference between the body and the soul, between matter and spirit. But one who has ascended from the burial-ground of matter, he knows that these two are separate and apart. Because of that knowledge he is able to withstand the onslaughts of material life. You may ask, why then does he not resist evil? He realizes the futility of resistance; he knows that his soul is invincible; he rises to a higher plane. This is the sum and substance of all religions and philosophies.

Many are the means by which we realize our true identity. There are those who know the great, all-abiding and unbounded Spirit as their own soul. They say, "I know not whether Thou art in me or I am in Thee." It is all one and the same Spirit—how can we separate it? Through that Spirit we live, move and have our being; and it is a great calamity when we are not conscious of it. You may ask, if the soul is immortal what difference does it make whether we are conscious of it or not? It is true that the soul can never be killed or destroyed, but ignorance can cause hallucination and suffering. A philosopher may tell us that we are deathless, diseaseless, immortal, that nothing can afflict us; but when we feel separated from our Source, we

suffer pain, we fear, we shudder. Imaginations do not help us. We must have definite knowledge, and it is to bring us this knowledge that great souls incarnate. Christ's ascension was to make certain spiritual truths vivid. He proved before the world that That which is everlasting, nothing can destroy.

If we are armed, if we are fortified with spiritual understanding, it will enrich our life. We need not fear that it will take us away from the practical and make us visionary. Not at all. We shall go out into the world and face the things that we have to face in practical life and yet maintain our equilibrium and tranquillity. Who needs this understanding? Every man needs it. In our business life especially we need a wider viewpoint. We go to pieces when we take this material world just as it appears. Who can resist a powerful machine? No intelligent man ever tries to do it. If he has the knowledge he can utilize it, he can make it work for his own advantage. The same is true of our life. We cannot fight matter, but we can utilize it. Matter may be death, but it can be infused with Spirit. It can be used by the spirit of man. When we know how to do this in the right rhythm, with the right consciousness, not only do we benefit by it ourselves, we bring benefit to our fellow-beings. But if we take it as dead matter, it will fall upon us and crush us for the time being.

If we enter this world's conflict without true realization of life, not knowing its real value, not knowing how to lift up our head through a higher consciousness, we shall feel oppressed, no matter what may be our creed, our doctrine or our dogma. These cannot save us. The saving grace is within us; it is within every living soul. When a man allows himself to be surrounded by despondency and despair, when he doubts himself, when he does not believe

that the light of the soul is within him, then there is no one who can save him.

The greatest blessing an incarnate Spirit brings to this world is to awaken in each heart fresh hope and faith. He shows the invincible quality of the soul; how absolutely related we all are to the cosmic reservoir of life. When we follow in the footsteps of such a One, then we find that there is no death. We are already risen, and in that spiritual ascension we discover the fullness of existence and we glorify that Being from Whom we have descended.

We should be working constantly towards something better and higher. When we work towards lower ends we only carry a weight in our hand. It is better to have a free mind, a free heart and free hands, so that when the supreme Deity extends His hand to us, we may not say, "My hands are full; I cannot take Thy hand and follow Thee." Leave hand and heart free so that when the hour comes, you may with perfect trust give your hand and be lifted from the mire of worldly life in true spiritual ascension.

The dispositions, affections, inclinations of the soul, which shall issue hereafter in perfection, must be trained and nurtured in us throughout the whole course of this earthly life. When shall we bear in mind this plain truth, that the future perfection of the saints is not a translation from one state or disposition of soul into another, diverse from the former; but the carrying out, and, as it were, the blossom and the fruitage of one and the same principle of spiritual life, which, through their whole career on earth, has been growing with an even strength, putting itself forth in the beginnings and promise of perfection, reaching upward with steadfast aspirations after perfect holiness?—*H. E. Manning.*

MIRROR OF ETERNITY

From Stunden der Andacht

(An early 19th Century devotional work generally ascribed to the German mystic, Zschokke)

The world to me is a darkened mirror of eternity. That which I experience in detached fragments in this life, betrays to me what I shall one day experience in a more perfect life. For in the divine creation all is unbroken unity; all things are connected; there is no interruption of continuity. In the chain of the infinite universe there are no missing links. The here and the hereafter, life and eternity, are but one, they form but one whole without interruption. Were my eyesight sufficiently strong, I should discover in the minute seed, which a single blade of grass suffices to conceal, the gigantic tree which at the end of a hundred years will overshadow a whole valley.

All are one. Therefore are all things so closely linked together that the single links are often indistinguishable. In the eternal universe there is no yesterday and to-day; these only exist for us mortals who inhabit the little planet called the earth, which by revolving round the sun causes a fleeting alternation of light and shade, cold and heat, which we call days and seasons. In the eternal universe there is no beginning and no ending, but only a constant play of relations, and this is what we call life; but eternal as the things themselves, as all God's works, are also their varying relations to each other. Consequently there is an uninterrupted reticulation of life. The particular relations of certain parts may cease, but the substance or forces themselves can never cease to be; and as little can the constant variations of relations, i. e., life itself, cease to be. . . .

In this boundless ocean of the universe, wherein nothing

is ever annihilated, I also dwell. Like all that belongs to it, I can never cease to exist in it. I also am an inhabitant of the divine edifice, and the all-holy One on whose breath hang myriads of suns, I may call Father! My Father! Here as there I am within the bounds of eternity! There is no difference, for all is one. The hours, the years which pass over my head on this earth, are parts of eternity, drops in its ocean, in no way separate from it. . . . That which seems to us as a beginning and an ending, as a blooming and fading, as morning and evening; that which we call birth and death, old and young, is only the varying play of the relations of things in the universe, or the life of creation. That which we call death is therefore in itself a confirmation of life, an act of life, and life itself.

Time and eternity are the same to God. But they are likewise so to me. Why make this distinction? There is but one Eternal. After death I shall be in eternity, but I am already in it. After death I shall be with God; but here below already I live and move and have my being in God.

Men ask concerning the immortality of the soul, the employments of heaven. They even dream that Jesus has left replies to precisely these interrogatories. Never a moment did that sublime spirit speak in their *patois*. To truth, justice, love,—the attributes of the soul,—the idea of immutableness is essentially associated. The moment the doctrine of the immortality is separately taught, man is already fallen. In the flowing of love, in the adoration of humility, there is no question of continuance. No inspired man ever asks this question, or condescends to these evidences. For the soul is true to itself, and the man in whom it is shed abroad cannot wander from the present, which is infinite, to a future which would be finite.—*Emerson.*

CHORUS OF THE MORNING STARS

By Julia P. Dabney

"When the morning stars sang together
and all the sons of God shouted for joy."
Job xxxviii: 7.

Alleluia, Alleluia!
Praise be unto Him!
Unto Him, the Holy One,
Unto Him, the Only One,
Unto Him, the Living Sun!
Elohim!
Praise to Him!
The illimitable Light!
All the depth and all the height;
Glory infinite!
Alleluia!

Alleluia, Alleluia!
Praise Him all ye Seraphim,
Praise Him all ye Cherubim,
Praise Him shining firmament,
In a ceaseless sacrament;
Love Omnipotent!
Light and Love, Love and Light,
Love, the depth, and Love the height,
Love, the Mystery Infinite!
Elohim! Elohim!
Praise be unto Him!
Alleluia!

This Eternal Being that can never be proved, is to be perceived in one way only; it is spotless, beyond the ether, the unborn Self, great and eternal. Let a wise Brahmana, after he has discovered Him, practise wisdom. Let him not seek after many words, for that is mere weariness of the tongue.—*Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad.*

VIA CRUCIS

By Sister Daya

Where did the cross as an emblem of worship originate? How did it gain holy significance? Under what skies and in what circumstances did those two transverse lines take on a dignity and a meaning as immense as the figure itself is simple? Do not assume that the answer is Calvary. The way of the cross stretches farther than from the Praetorium to Golgotha. It reaches from the dim beginnings of human existence down to the present day. One cannot touch upon the history of this symbol without becoming involved in the religious history of the human race. Humanity is one. Past, present and future are one; and one is religion. It flows in an unbroken stream through the ages, fed by a thousand rivers, refreshed by countless pure springs, but always flowing, flowing from the infinite, original Source. Grasp the scope of this, so implicit in Christianity, and the passion of Christ will take on a meaning and a majesty which His human personality assumed when He declared: "Before Abraham was, I am." Has He not been likened in His crucifixion to "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world"?

In the Rig Veda, probably the oldest Aryan Scripture extant, it is written: "The first-born being, before the beginning of material phenomena, became a victim of sacrifice. The devas, gods and angels who came later, took the first-born being for the animal of sacrifice, fastened him to a sacrificial post, sanctified him, stretching his limbs in eternal space. From that sacrifice arose all that exists on the earth and in the heavens." These ancient sacrificial posts were always in the form of a cross, as is well known to students of Vedic literature. Thus it is seen that the primeval Vedic revelation associated the first-born Son of

God with sacrifice on a cross. Hindu paintings of great age, place it in the hands of the Avataras or divine manifestations and in the hands of the different aspects of Deity. Vishnu, the Second Person in the Hindu Trinity, is often shown as holding in his hand a cross. He represents the sustaining principle, the love aspect, and His followers, the Vaishnavites, whose worship is peculiarly devotional, are marked on the forehead with the Y shaped cross which is to them a sacred symbol. Sri Krishna, the Avatara of Vishnu, is sometimes pictured as standing in the centre of the world as its sustaining principle, with six arms, three of which hold the cross. It is found in the most ancient temples of India, some being cruciform in shape. In the cave-temple of Elephanta which dates back to pre-Buddhistic times, there is a figure of the Hindu Trinity holding a huge cross in one of its hands.

Perhaps the most universal form of the cross is the swastika, known sometimes as the Buddhistic cross or the Wheel of the Law. It is really the Greek cross with its ends bent at right angles and turned either to the right or to the left. This is the most usual form of the cross in India. The word swastika signifies well-being. Even sitting with crossed legs, or crossing the arms upon the breast were swastika postures, indicating safety and protection. In ancient Brahmanical literature the word "to swastika oneself" meant what now we would call crossing oneself. In Sir Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia," Asita, the old Rishi, recognizes the infant Buddha by the foot-sole marks, "the soft-curled tendrils of the swastika". It went with Buddhist missionaries into the Far East; but according to Fa Hsien and Hsuang Tsang, the swastika was found in Thibet and China centuries before Gautama Buddha preached the Law.

In Norse mythology, the swastika is found in the hand of the Thunderer and is known as the Hammer of Thor. The ancient Norsemen made this sign over their food to consecrate it. We read in the Heimskringla Saga: "Now when the first full goblet was filled, Earl Sigurd spoke some words over it, and blessed it in Odin's name, and drank to the king out of the horn; and the king then took it and made the sign of the cross over it. Then said Kaare of Greyting, 'What does the king mean by doing so? Will he not sacrifice?' But Earl Sigurd replied, 'The king is doing what all of you do who trust in your power and strength; for he is blessing the full goblet in the name of Thor, by making the sign of his hammer over it before he drinks it'." The original Vedic concept of the Deity sacrificing Himself to Himself finds an echo in the Elder Edda where the sacrifice of Odin, the All-Father, on the tree of the world is described: "I knew that I hung in the wind-rocked tree nine whole nights, wounded with a spear and to Odin offered Myself to Myself, on that tree of which no one knows from what root it springs."

The swastika cross together with the Egyptian key of life, the *crux ansata*, was used by the first Christians as the symbol of the new faith. It is found in many of the early Christian tombs in the catacombs at Rome, whereas the Christian cross as it is known to-day, does not appear in the catacombs until the end of the fourth century, and nowhere in the catacombs is it depicted as an instrument of martyrdom with the Crucified. A map on the distribution of the swastika, shows that it has been found practically wherever anthropologists have searched both in the old world and the new: "On monuments of the most ancient date, on pottery of the Neolithic and bronze ages, on prehistoric terra-cotta figures, on altars, on coins, on shields,

on weapons and on amulets of various descriptions." Its use has almost always been identified with some form of worship.

The swastika does not seem to have been known in Egypt. There, however, we find another form of cross, the Tau cross, so-called because it resembles the Greek letter T. There are other Egyptian symbols representing various forms of crosses, but the Tau seems to have had a peculiarly religious significance. It is frequently shown as growing out of a human heart. Crowned with a ring or circle it becomes the *crux ansata* or handle cross. This is almost always associated with the Egyptian deities, being held by the loop in the right hand of the god. It is known as the key of life and denotes immortality. When Osiris is pictured as holding the *crux ansata* towards a mortal, the death of that mortal and the survival of his soul is indicated. This has even deeper significance when we remember that the legend of Osiris is a story of resurrection.

It is impossible to do more than touch upon the history of the cross. It is shown repeatedly in the hands of the Phoenician goddess Astarte, as well as in the hand of Ishtar, the Assyrian goddess. The most ancient tombs found in Europe, tombs of a people about whom history is mute, were decorated with the cross. It was evidently for them a symbol of hope and immortality. M. de Mortillet who investigated these ancient sepulchres writes: "The examination of the tombs of Golasecca proves in a most convincing, positive and precise manner—that above a thousand years before Christ, the cross was already a religious emblem of frequent employment".

When the Spanish conquerors came to Central America, they were amazed to find the cross in the ancient native temples where it was worshipped as a symbol of a deity at

once terrible and beneficent. Moreover it was looked upon as emblematic of a fabled hero, Quetzalcoalt who according to tradition, was white and bearded and came from the east. Apparently the religious rites of Mexico and Central America were marked by very great cruelty; but involved in this we find again the sacrifice of the god to the god. The sacrificial victim was generally a slave or a captive. For forty days before the sacrifice took place, divine honors were paid him and he was worshipped as the impersonator of the god,—the supreme solar deity. When the final day came, he was sacrificed before the image of the god and afterwards his body constituted a sacred meal. Horrible as this may seem, perverted as it may be, it shows a connection between the bloody ritual of Central America and a tradition ancient as the human race.

Why is the cross associated always with a sacrificial deity? Why is it through the ages a symbol of resurrection and immortality? Why did the ancient peoples of Europe lay them down in the dust under its protection? Why was it the emblem wherewith Thor smote the head of the serpent and gave life to the slain? Why did savage mothers place their babes beneath its shadow for safekeeping? A thousand explanations have been advanced, chiefly along the line of nature and sun worship. These explanations are no doubt partially correct; but may it not be that the solar myth and the worship of the elements are only the outer and crude expressions of some tremendous cosmic fact which nature constantly symbolizes?

In the Bhagavad-Gita it is said: "O best of the Kurus, not even this world is for the non-performer of sacrifice, how much less is the other world". Sacrifice is that cosmic fact. We must die to live. Sacrifice gives power. Even the savage mind could grasp certain crude aspects of this

truth. As for the cross, the universal symbol of sacrifice, one can only surmise concerning it. So much we know: the human body is a cross and the human heart is an eternal Golgotha. Thus man in himself exemplifies both crucifixion and the cross; in his early development, the crucifixion of spirit upon the cross of matter; in his later growth, the crucifixion of matter upon the cross of spirit. Whether or not the symbolism of the cross is cosmic, brought down to us in some primal revelation; whether or not it gained its meaning through the original sacrifice of some god-man, or came as a slow evolution from the primitive placing of one stick across another, its relationship with human life is evident. It could not have persisted as a symbol through all the ages were this not so. Again and again its light has been darkened for men, but never wholly obscured. Always there has been the divine Voice crying, "He that loseth his life shall find it". But so dense are our hearts that it took the actual physical death on Calvary to stir us from our sleep.

Every great saint and saviour enacts in his life the passion of Christ. The way of illumination is the way of the cross; a way as yet but little understood by humanity. We associate the symbol of life with death and agony; but the shadow which the cross seems to cast upon our lives is but the shadow from our own selfish hearts. It is light that shines from the cross. When we cease to block that light, then shall we know the true meaning of the cross; then shall we enter into the glory of sacrifice.

Nothing can work me damage except myself. The harm that I sustain, I carry about with me, and I never am a real sufferer but by my own fault.—*St. Bernard.*

JOURNEY OF THE SOUL

From Hermes Trismegistus

Tat. Now in the General Sermons, father, thou didst speak in riddles most unclear, conversing on Divinity; and when thou saidst no man could e'er be saved before rebirth, thy meaning thou didst hide. Further, when I became thy suppliant, in wending up the Mount, after thou hadst conversed with me, and when I longed to learn the Sermon on rebirth (for this beyond all other things is just the thing I know not), thou saidst, that thou wouldst give it me—"when thou shalt have become a stranger to the world." Wherefore I got me ready and made the thought in me a stranger to the world-illusion.

Now do thou fill up the things that fall short in me with what thou saidst would give me the tradition of rebirth, setting it forth in speech or in the secret way. I know not, O Thrice-greatest One, from out what matter and what womb man comes to birth, or of what seed.

Hermes. Wisdom that understands in silence, such is the matter and the womb from out which man is born, and the True Good the seed.

Tat. Who is the sower, father? For I am altogether at a loss.

Hermes. It is the will of God, my son.

Tat. And of what kind is he that is begotten, father? For I have no share of that essence in me, which doth transcend the senses. The one that is begot will be another one from God, God's Son?

Hermes. All in all, out of all powers composed.

Tat. Thou tellest me a riddle, father, and dost not speak as father unto son.

Hermes. This race, my son, is never taught; but when He willeth it, its memory is restored by God.

Tat. Thou sayest things impossible, O father, things that are forced. Hence answers would I have direct unto these things. Am I a son strange to my father's race? Keep it not, father, back from me. I am a true-born son; explain to me the manner of rebirth.

Hermes. What may I say, my son? I can but tell thee *this*. Whene'er I see within myself the simple vision brought to birth out of God's mercy, I have passed through myself into a body that can never die. And now I am not what I was before; but I am born in Mind. The way to do this is not taught, and it cannot be seen by the compounded element by means of which thou seest.

Yea, I have had my former composed form dismembered for me. I am no longer touched; I have dimension too; yet I am a stranger to them now. Thou seest me with eyes, my son; but what I am thou dost not understand even with fullest strain of body and of sight.

Tat. Into fierce frenzy and mind-fury hast thou plunged me, father, for now no longer do I see myself.

Hermes. I would, my son, that thou hadst e'en passed right through thyself, as they who dream in sleep yet sleepless.

Tat. Tell me this too: Who is the author of rebirth?

Hermes. The Son of God, the one man, by God's will.

Tat. Now hast thou brought me, father, unto pure stupefaction. . . .

Hermes. Even in this thou art untrue; the mortal form doth change with every day. 'Tis turned by time to growth and waning, as being an untrue thing.

Tat. What then is true, Thrice-greatest One?

Hermes. That which is never troubled, son, which cannot be defined; that which no colour hath, nor any figure, which is not turned, which hath no garment, which giveth

light; that which is comprehensible unto itself alone, which doth not suffer change; that which no body can contain.

Tat. In very truth I lose my reason, father. Just when I thought to be made wise by thee, I find the senses of this mind of mine blocked up.

Hermes. Thus it is, son: That which is upward borne like fire, yet is borne down like earth; that which is moist like water, yet blows like air; how shalt thou *this* perceive with sense—that which is not solid nor yet moist, which naught can bind or loose, of which in power and energy alone can man have any notion,—and even then it wants a man who can perceive the way of birth in God?

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

During the month of March the blessing of rain came to California, ending a long and devastating drought. Almost over night the hills turned from brown to emerald, while hosts of wild flowers flew their banners of purple, rose and gold. Stormy Sundays have failed to check the Sunday congregation. In spite of showers and slippery roads, large numbers have come from Los Angeles, Pasadena and nearby towns. One friend, a young woman, was not turned back even by a river of mud, but ventured through it with her car, so eager was she to hear the Swami. It is this spirit of eager interest and determination that is helping to build up the Ashrama.

The Swami of late has organized his resident workers into a little brush-clearing band and has on several occasions worked with them, clearing out undergrowth from small side canyons and cutting trails, thus making accessible certain charming portions of the property. This has resulted in enthusiastic offers of service from outside members who have been happy to spend an afternoon cultivating the

chapel garden or doing more strenuous work. True devotion does not need to be told how to serve. Some faithful friends, seeing the need of added seating accommodation for the large Sunday congregation, made the Ashrama a gift of seventy-three folding chairs of the best type. These they delivered themselves, making many trips in their car all the way from a beach town thirty miles away.

The "Message of the East", after some vicissitudes, has been fortunate in finding an excellent printer in the neighbouring town of Tujunga, only fifteen minutes by motor from the Ashrama. This should facilitate the publication of the "Message", until the Swami's plan is carried out and the Ashrama possesses a fully equipped publication house of its own with printing press and bindery.

Not infrequently Swami Paramananda gives permission to a friend in a far-away land to translate one of his books. This permission often slips his mind so that when his "Path of Devotion", his "Way of Peace and Blessedness" or some other of his works arrives in a new dress and in a new tongue, it comes as a pleasant surprise. Only lately this has occurred with his "Upanishads" which a student in Sweden has translated into Swedish and brought out with excellent taste in booklet form. Germany has several of the Swami's works in translation, while in French "La Voie de la Devotion" has a charm and tenderness peculiarly its own. In India the Swami's writings have found their way into many of the native tongues,—Bengali, Hindustani, Tamil, Urdu and are being read by thousands.

* * *

The Vedanta Centre of Boston has held steady during the Swami's long absence in California. Miss Katharine Sherwood has faithfully conducted the Sunday Services and with

the household members still there, has formed a nucleus round which have gathered all the faithful friends of the work.

THE VIGIL

Book Reviews

The Swami Paramananda, author of "The Soul's Secret Door", and the teacher whose following gathers at the Vedanta Centre, 1 Queensberry Street, published another book of poems, "The Vigil". It is a companion volume to "The Soul's Secret Door", and its verse has the same high spiritual quality. Though the author's mysticism is something that few of us can readily grasp, it is not at all difficult to feel the vitality an dthe fine idealism that pervades these little poems. The Swami himself is passing the winter in the Sierra Madre mountains of Southern California at the Peace Retreat established by him as an extension of the Vedanta Centre of this city.—*Boston Herald, Boston, Mass.*

"Our thoughts lift us up to vision's
lofty heights,"

says Swami Paramananda in one of his poems in his latest collection of verse, "The Vigil." The line voices and describes the spirit of all the poems in the book. Here is complete devotion to the Spirit of Life and Love, the compassionate Master of Fate. These songs are the chants of child-like faith, clothed in all the austerity and beauty that mark the holy scriptures themselves. Much of the verse is high lyrical, as in the "Song of Dawn:"

"It is dawn; it is dawn!
Behold the glory of morn!
Stay thou no more slumbering,
The dark of night is gone.
It is dawn; it is dawn!"

—*Times-Star, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

MAY, 1924

HEALING AND PREVENTIVE METHODS

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When Swami Paramananda's earlier volume, "Soul's Secret Door," was published, no one who read it failed to recognize its sincerity, its beauty, its surpassing calm. The present book, it seems to me, is even a higher accomplishment. It has carried the splendid growth of the earlier verse to a more splendid fruition. It is amazing what this Oriental writer can do with vers libre. Would that our own professional writers of free verse could come within miles of him; but, perhaps, that is too much to expect, for Swami Paramananda has a message! We are better for listening to it. What a great Christian he is, in spite of the fact that his religion is of the Orient. How good a thing it would be for America if all our professed ministers of Christ could write simply and sincerely, as this servant of God has done.—*Enquirer, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.
Published monthly except in August and September

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HEALING AND PREVENTIVE METHODS

By Swami Paramananda

THE question of healing is neither modern nor ancient. So long as there is sickness there will be search for health. No matter how far back we go in history we find instances of healing, for the simple reason that the human soul always seeks relief from suffering. This relief comes in many ways; there have been many methods of healing. Some seek aid through material means and not till those means fail does the soul turn to higher resources. The healing which results from this turning of the soul to its Source is what men call a miracle. A life is given up by the best physicians; all hope is abandoned; yet without any apparent cause the patient lives and recovers. Those who have no inward vision regard it as miraculous, but those who are open to the inward light look upon it as the natural fulfillment of the law of life. It is the fulfillment of this law. Wherever there is life there is absence of death, of anything pertaining to death. Wherever there is light, there is no access for darkness. Now the question is, how may we bring in the light? Instead of leaving our house in darkness and crying that we cannot see, what means may we employ to keep it always lighted?

At the present time all men are discussing the question of healing. It is one of the most absorbing themes of the day. Practically every modern religious movement, whether it is based upon New Thought, Psychology or Metaphysics, has its department for healing. Christian Science is well known for its healing work. Some have wondered why a movement such as the Vedanta should apparently lay so little stress upon it. Spiritual history teaches us that true divine healing is something not to be spoken of or discussed. It cannot be practised professionally. It is a power which comes from the unseen realm; and only those who call upon it with that deeper feeling, giving it no name, seeking to use it with no ulterior motive or sense of self, they alone are capable of using it for the benefit of their fellowmen. Therefore it is best to approach it with a hush of silence. Nature always performs her work in silence. A seed is planted in the womb of mother earth. Silently, quietly, Nature nourishes it. Then when the soul of it is expanded, it bursts forth into blossom. Silence has done the work. Silence always does the work. The greatest powers work silently. This does not mean that we should cease to look for healing. Not in the least! But there are certain fundamental principles in life which we can follow only when we unite our forces with the higher laws. We cannot draw a lofty principle down from a higher plane and utilize it for our material purposes. If we would benefit by it, we must lift ourselves to that height. Only in this way do we find fulfillment.

"Prevention is better than cure." Whoever first conceived this wise axiom gave to the world of thought a most vital formula for constructive living. If it is true that prevention is better than cure, then we shall be interested not only in the cure of illness, but in its prevention. This

means we must look for the cause of sickness before we can find the remedy. Even in medical science this method is applied. A physician makes a thorough examination of the case before he gives his opinion or prescribes the remedy. Sometimes he finds the cause in exposure, sometimes in over-eating or in wrong diet or in nervous strain. But whatever the cause, always it is directly connected with the life of the individual; and if the cause is found in the life and habits of the individual, then the remedy must also be there. As a rule we are more interested in the phenomena of healing than in removing the possibility of disease. If, however, we carry in our mind thoughts of cure, invariably we dwell on sickness; one connects us with the other. If a man sets out upon the water in a damaged boat, he may carry with him a dozen life-savers, but that does not prevent his boat from sinking. Similarly, though we carry with us many remedies for our ills, they do not prevent our having illness. How much better it is to learn to live in such absolute harmony with Nature that we avoid it.

Are there no miracles of healing? Even miracles do not take place without a just cause. Miracles are only performed where there is fitness of condition. There is a miracle of love. You can perform this miracle of love. You can perform the miracle of faith; but if you try to look to some superior being to do your work, and become wholly dependent on him, you will be much mistaken. No great soul ever wants to make any one dependent. The great souls come to awaken within us the faculty of seeing, of feeling and of doing. When do we learn to see things in a clear light? When we walk in the light. When do we feel most strong? When we are not at all conscious of having a physical body. And what makes us free from bodily consciousness? The spirit of love. When a

man is inspired by love what can he not do! He will jump into the fire; he overcomes even Nature through sheer force of selfless love. A miracle is always performed in unusual circumstances and these we ourselves create.

The higher realms of life are not for the idle curiosity-seeker; they are for those who are willing to think for themselves. More needful than all the methods invented for healing is to teach people how to live in a normal way, depending on their own resources, adjusting themselves to circumstances as they may arise. No set of rules can be made out:—to eat this or to eat that; to think these thoughts and not those. Circumstances are always changing. We must learn how to control them by our inward power. You may ask, where shall we find that power? It is already within us; but we must awaken it, we must utilize it. It is a vital duty. When any one accomplishes this, he benefits not only his community or his country; his influence reaches the whole human race.

At first this may seem to be only an abstract ideal. All great ideals are abstract. We make them concrete, we make them living, by our own life. Love, for instance, is an abstract ideal. A man may talk in a loud voice about love and universality, but he will never convey its true picture to us until we see him doing something loving. When we find the fulfillment of love in a life, it is inspiring; when we find it in our own life, then we are able to counteract evil. To be disturbed physically, mentally or morally is to deplete our whole system. If we would be well, we must guard ourselves against mental and moral agitation and depression. The consequences may not be felt at once, but we shall feel them later. That is the reason the wise always tell us we must order our inner being.

Merely bringing relief to the physical body does not re-

move the real cause of suffering. Anger poisons. Whether it arises from a just or an unjust cause makes no difference. Whenever we allow ourselves to be angry, we exhaust our nerve force. We are unstrung. Our body is in terrible upheaval; our mind in a chaotic condition. In this way we make ourselves susceptible to ills of all kinds. We often think that a trap is set for us by some evil spirit; but it is we ourselves who set the trap. When we are angry, anger becomes the trap. If we commit a crime, that crime becomes the trap. For those who believe in a personal devil, these are his temptations; but these temptations do not need to come near us. They can have no access to our life when we fortify ourselves with noble thoughts and feelings. If we begin each day fortified in this way, shall we not be protected both physically and mentally?

There are certain great laws. If we understand them and apply them in our life, we shall become strong and invincible. Evil is overcome by good; hatred is overcome by love; anger is overcome by gentleness. These opposing forces are constantly working. You may say, "I was perfectly justified in being upset." Yes; but you are also perfectly justified in reaping the consequences. You cannot avoid them. If we permit our mind to be disturbed, no matter what the occasion, we shall suffer for it. We shall weaken ourselves and disease will find us an easy prey. Even though some one may cure us or we ourselves may find a remedy, it often takes months to recover from the effects of an illness. How much better to adjust our life in such a way as to avoid all this unnecessary depression. We can avoid it by higher and more normal living. If we can keep our whole being in right rhythm, unconsciously we shall strengthen ourselves. It is not merely by mental calculation that we escape tragedies and misfortunes; it is

rather when we do not think or plan, but fill our heart with such deep and pure feeling that we are naturally protected by higher powers. This is what every man must learn to do.

There is no such thing as accident. Physical science is proving it. Spirituality has always proved it. Divine law governs our destiny. We must learn to work in harmony with that law. The Supreme Being is ever seeking our co-operation; it is we who withhold it. We become rebellious and egotistic. It may be from ignorance; but that does not save us. If we put our hand in the fire ignorantly, it will be burned just the same; and even if it is afterwards healed, the scar remains. By avoiding ignorance, we avoid suffering; we avoid its ill effect upon both body and mind.

Who protected you before your body's birth? Who protected you in your childhood? The fairy stories that we hear of a guardian angel watching over little ones are more true than we know. That guardian angel is always seeking an opportunity to watch over and protect us; but we create such a material barricade that we give no access to it. We take the responsibility in our own hands. We calculate; we scheme; we shut our door on the very power which could guard and save us. Let us learn to open the door,—the door of our heart, of our inner being, so that the light of Truth may shine through freely and constantly, keeping us fresh and free from darkness, that we may not blunder. We do not blunder consciously; no one would. Sometimes out of greed or selfishness we do something which brings a reaction. The reaction is not accidental. We made it possible for greed to over-rule our higher instinct, or we allowed the impulse of anger to rise in us. That is the reason we should seek to enter into the rhythm of life; to direct our forces through higher channels by means of contemplation, so as to create a constant flow of

power from the reservoir of life. Life overcomes death. Life overcomes disease; and those who keep themselves well supplied with the power of light prevent all forms of illness.

But suppose we have been overtaken by physical ills or other misfortunes? How shall we conduct ourselves then? How shall we keep from becoming unbalanced? Here is the difference between the ignorant man and the man of wisdom. The person who permits himself to be unnerved by circumstances only makes his difficulties worse. He magnifies and multiplies them, while he who takes everything calmly and bravely, with tranquillity of body, mind and heart, meets and conquers his present troubles; and often through his balance and intelligence avoids possible future ills. If we do not possess these qualities, we may possess all the treasures of earth, but they will profit us nothing. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, and what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The great Roman philosopher Epictetus tells us that it is better for the soul to be cured than the body. That is, the inner man must be adjusted, must be full of health and power. Unless the inner man is sound, there can be no real health. We have heard this often, but sometimes we fail to take in the depth of its meaning. If our inner life controls our outer life and our destiny, then we cannot afford to neglect it. It is through the power of the Spirit man liveth. That is why we should always keep the power of the Spirit before us, behind us, all about us. In one of the Vedic Upanishads there is a wonderful passage: In that which is finite there is no happiness. It is the finite which gives us trouble. Let no one depend upon the finite. That which is unbounded, eternal and infinite, therein lies the happiness of man; therein lies his fulfillment.

When man has united himself with that Infinite, that Vast, does he not transcend all the ills of life? We rise above all our troubles, not by thinking of them, not by focusing our mind upon our headaches or our heartaches, but by taking our mind entirely off of them. We think too much of the body. That is our difficulty. So long as we think of the body, so long as we think of sickness, there will be sickness. It is better to think of things of the Spirit. The body is only one part of our life. If we saturate our consciousness with thoughts of the body and bodily feelings, we cannot escape illness. You may say, we cannot change our whole mode of life and thought and cease to think of the body. That is true; but let us think of the body in conjunction with That which sustains it. This is the natural, logical way, the balancing point in our life.

Nobody is asking us to hate the body; that would be wrong. No one is asking us to neglect the body. To do so would be to impair our welfare. But let this body of ours be sustained by higher powers. That is, let us live with the consciousness of the soul in the body. When body and soul work together in harmony, then do we find the fulfillment of life. We see this in the lives of great men. They live in the world and yet they are not overwhelmed by the influence of the world. When we have learned to adjust our life in this way, we shall without striving counteract evil; and we shall soar higher and higher as we go. Everything that we do with our hands and feet in our every day life will contribute towards our spiritual redemption. That is the thought I want you to carry in your mind; not merely finding a remedy when you have sickness; but avoiding that sickness by keeping yourself in such good tune, in such absolute harmony, that at all hours of the day and night the power of the Infinite may flow through you, and through you find its access into other hearts.

We do not begin to fulfill our life and its duties until we can do something for others. This doing for others does not merely mean charity, giving food and clothes and relieving suffering temporarily. It means awakening the inner faculties in our brother, and this we cannot do so long as they are asleep within us. First they must be awakened within our own heart and then they will have their influence upon the hearts of others. People are constantly crying out for help, but we are not always giving them the right kind of help. The right help can only come from within and it makes no difference whether the stimulus is from one religion or another. There is but one cosmic Spirit, permeating all, sustaining all. When we approach the threshold of that Spirit, when we become filled with something divine and holy, then no longer do we see these distinctions. Can a man partition off the infinite sky? No more is he able to divide that infinite Power. It is One, only One,—One without a second. When we realize our unity with that One, then do we give a death blow to all ills and ignorance; then do we enjoy perpetual healthfulness and our spirit transcends and proves its mastery over the flesh and the material world.

St. Bernard has said: "Man, if thou desirest a noble and holy life, and unceasingly prayest to God for it, if thou continue constant in this thy desire, it will be granted unto thee without fail. . . ." Therefore do not relinquish your desire, though it be not fulfilled immediately, or though ye may swerve from your aspirations, or even forget them for a time. . . . The love and aspiration which once really existed live forever before God, and in Him ye shall find the fruit thereof; that is, to all eternity it shall be better for you than if you had never felt them.—*John Tauler, 13th Century.*

ALL THINGS ARE ONE

By Heraclitus. 6th Century B. C.

(Heraclitus was born at Ephesus, in Asia Minor, about 15 years later than Buddha in India.)

Listening, not to me, but to the Word, it is wise for me to confess that all things are one.

Though the Word always speaks, yet men are born without understanding for it, both before they hear it, and at first after they have heard it. For though all things are produced according to this Word, men seem to be unaware of it, making attempts at such words and deeds as I explain by separating them according to their nature, and telling them as they are. But other men fail as completely to recognize what they do while they are awake as they forget what they do when asleep.

Having ears and understanding not, they are like deaf men. To them the proverb applies: "While they're here they're yonder."

For many men have no wisdom regarding those things with which they come in contact, nor do they learn by experience. They are opinions even to themselves.

Of all the men whose words I have heard, no one hath gone far enough to recognize that the wise is separate from all things.

For the wise is one—to know the principle whereby all things are steered through all.

This world, which is the same for all, neither any god nor any man made; but it was always, is, and ever shall be, an ever-living fire, kindling by measure and dying out of measure.

An invisible harmony is better than a visible.

Let us make no random guesses about the greatest things.

The upward and the downward way are one and the same. Beginning and end are identical.

The bounds of the soul thou shalt not find, though thou travel every way.

Common to all is wisdom. They who speak with reason must take their stand upon that which is common to all, as firmly as a State does upon its law, and much more firmly. For all human laws are fed by the one divine law; it prevaileth as far as it listeth, and sufficeth for all, and surviveth all.

Though the Word is universal, most men live as if each had a wisdom of his own.

Even they that sleep are laborers and co-workers in all that is done in the world.

A foolish man bears the same relation to a divinity as a child to a man.

WHY THE BODHISATTVA IS ILL

From the Vimalakirti-Nirdesa

Manjusri asked, "My friend, whence is your illness? Long you have been unwell. How should you be cured?"

Vimalakirti replied: "Because of ignorance there is desire, and thence comes my illness. Because all things are ill, I am ill. When their illness disappears, my illness will also disappear. Why? It was for the sake of all beings that the Bodhisattva has long been on the path of birth and death, and since he has thus suffered himself to be there, he shows illness. When beings are rid of their illness, the Bodhisattva will also be rid of his illness. He is like unto the parents of an only child in a good family. When the child is sick, its parents are sick, when it is recovered, they are also recovered. So with the Bodhisattva; he loves all beings as an only child; when they are ill he is ill, and when they are well he is also well . . . His illness is caused by his great loving heart."

Reprinted from "The Eastern Buddhist."

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

In the beginning Brahman (the Supreme) was all this. He was one and infinite. . . . Thus it is said: He who is in the fire, and he who is in the heart, and he who is in the sun, they are one and the same. He who knows this becomes one with the One.—*Maitrayana-Brahmana-Upanishad.*

The devout soul is always safe in every state, if it makes everything an occasion either of rising up, or falling down into the hands of God, and exercising faith and trust and resignation to Him. The pious soul, that eyes only God, that means nothing but being His alone, can have no stop put to its progress; light and darkness equally assist him: in the light he looks up to God, in the darkness he lays hold on God, and so they both do him the same good.—*Wm. Law.*

If the hand, foot, and body become unclean, being washed with water, the dirt is removed. If soiled be the cloth, with soap it may be washed. If the heart is defiled with wrong doing, it is washed in the dye of the Name of God.—*Adi-Granth.*

For man to conquer himself is the first and noblest of all victories, whereas to be vanquished by himself is the basest and most shameful of all things. For such expressions show that there is a war in each of us against ourselves. Sin is disease, deformity and weakness.—*Plato.*

We are not content with the life we have in ourselves and in our own being; we wish to live an imaginary life in the idea of others, and to this end we strive to make a show. We labor incessantly to embellish and preserve this imagi-

nary being, and we neglect the true. And if we have either calmness, generosity, or fidelity, we hasten to let it be known, that we may attach these virtues to that imaginary being; we would even part with them for this end and gladly become cowards for the reputation of valor.—*Pascal.*

In all your actions place God before your eye.—*Sextus the Pythagorean.*

Are not all things vain which come not from God?—*Lebid.*

Do not dare to live without some clear intention toward which your living shall be bent. Mean to be something with all your might.—*Phillips Brooks.*

Let your dwelling be with the fearless and conduct yourself toward the light of God. For there neither sword nor poison have power to destroy and sin cannot enter. Ye will live even as God liveth, and the fire of death will be guarded, as it were, with water. He that meditateth will naturally be happy because he is wise and suffereth not the passions to spread over his soul. He loveth but one God.—*Dadu.*

Fearless minds climb soonest unto crowns.—*Shakespeare.*

Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be faint-hearted. . . . But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.—*Isaiah.*

Let pain and body look to themselves, but thou, my mind, remain happy.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

LIFE'S PERPETUAL SPRING

By Swami Paramananda

When life's perpetual spring is unsealed
Your stains will be washed,
Your thirst will be quenched,
And your parched spirit healed by its
living waters.
In its miracle your barren heart will
blossom with love, hope and joy.
These three flowers of fruitful life
Scatter their precious perfume with wings
of angels.
Their unseen power transforms world's
ugliness to beatific vision,
Storms of anger to gentle peace,
And brute passion to divine affection.

THE MYSTERY OF JUSTICE

By A. E. Gibson

Truth is the signature of life. The individual is a prism for the divine life. If he keeps his mind pure, he will find himself a prism of living light, a dispenser of truth. But he who in word or deed gives expression to something which he knows to be untrue is a false prism, distorting truth and adding a new weight to the burden of human falsehood. Yet in itself truth is imperishable and cannot be lost; its distortion into falsehood is merely temporary and it is destined to re-emerge, restored to its pure untainted essence. Ever remaining in sympathetic touch with the false mind, which gave it birth, the falsehood, whenever its initiatory impulse is spent, returns to its parent-source to be redeemed and restored to truth. This gives the dynamic side to slander and calumny. If people real-

ized that the ignominy and ill-fame of which they consider themselves innocent victims are their own progeny returning to be redeemed, they would take the bitter administrations without protest or lamentation. *Karma,* or the law of cause and effect, is unsleeping and sure, and every insult, be it ever so seemingly undeserved, is an opportunity given the sufferer to redeem Karmic pledges; to divert truth from the guise of falsehood he once gave to it, and to restore his disturbed inner relations with humanity.

If law and order are recognized as fashioners of evolution, then man who is a part of evolution must ever be found in a position and amid environments where the vital currents of his entire past are focalized. Though in the hands of an invincible and implacable law, his case, however desperate, is nevertheless not hopeless. His redemption lies in resignation to the past and receptivity to the future. "And what is divine law to man? To hold fast that which is his own and to claim nothing that is another's; to use what is given him and not to covet what is not given; to yield up easily and willingly what is taken away, giving thanks for the time he has had it at his service." Whatever we have sown, we must reap. But far more telling than the event itself (good or bad) is the manner in which we accept it. Ninety per cent. of threatening misfortunes are dissolved into airy nothings when met by courage and fortitude. Not infrequently when looking back upon the past, do we find that much which we once looked upon with fear and anguish, in the course of later events, became a means of turning our life into higher and nobler channels.

Once generated, the Karmic forces cannot be stayed in their work of adjustment. The arm of retributive justice is sure at some time or another to reach the offender. But man is a dual being; one part, of earth, earthy; the other

part of heaven, heavenly. Oscillating between these like the charged needle between its two poles, the mystic unit of consciousness—the human soul—is ever moving, sometimes uniting itself with the one, sometimes with the other. Sin ensues when the soul identifies itself with its lower companion and uses the animal force of the latter for the realization of egoistic ends. Following the vital threads connecting a cause with its effect, as the electric spark follows the conducting wire, the stored up Karmic energy seeks in this lower pole of consciousness (the scene of the transgression) a forum for its adjustments. Hence it follows that the soul is actually made to suffer only to the extent to which it is in touch with the conduits of the Karmic discharges. Rising on wings of intense aspirations to unite with its spiritual self, the soul may disconnect itself from the field where the law operates; as in the case of the martyr who is found singing songs of rapture and exaltation while the flames of the faggots are consuming his mortal frame. The same is often experienced by the hero on the battle field, who through the exaltation of patriotism rises momentarily above the plane of physical suffering.

A thing or an event can hurt us only through the attitude we take towards it. A misfortune receives its character from the character of the person subjected to it. A financial loss sustained by two persons in similar economic circumstances may stimulate the one and paralyze the other. "Anytus and Miletus are able to kill me indeed," said Socrates, "but to harm me, never." When subjected to malicious attacks the individual should try to realize that the ultimate cause must always be found within himself; and that his adversaries, personal or impersonal, are merely agents by and through which he is vitally linked to the effects of his past transgressions. As to the "instruments",

their relation to the Karmic adjustment will depend upon the motive by which they have been moved. If impersonal, they have involved no responsibility; if personal, their turn for adjustment will come when the time is due.

Our social positions are not items of chance, but of destiny. Man is a blossom on the tree of his own evolution. Environment is powerful, but its power in order to be useful must be subjugated and controlled. But Nature can be controlled only by those who understand her. Man is rising in the scale of universal evolution to the extent to which he discerns and self-consciously adjusts his relations to Nature. Thus man is ever in a place where he is best needed and needs best to be, though his occupation may serve either as a punishment or as a lesson, according to what he makes of it. Only when he learns the inner, the moral lesson of an occupation, will he find the means for further advancement. No power in the two worlds of mind and matter can hold a man to a position which he has outgrown, nor remove him from a condition where he has still something to learn. Nature needs man for the success of her evolutionary efforts. A street cleaner or scavenger has his evolutionary office, and Nature cannot do without him. The realization of this truth and the dutiful living up to it render the simplest menial laborer Nature's nobleman. To him who cheerfully performs his duties Nature reveals her secrets. Duty is the trade-wind of evolution and to follow it means sure and peaceful progress.

No transgression of the moral law is more fatal to the happiness and peace of man than falsehood. All that is tainted with falsehood belongs to the night side of Nature —destructive and deadly. It is not the lack of mental acuteness that degenerates the race and the individual, but the lack of truth. The rise and fall of empires have not been

brought about through inequality in arms and numbers, but through inequality in truth. Whatever be the action, if it proceeds in harmony with the laws of life it stands for truth. If a man thinks one thing and says or does another, he causes disruption in the chain of his vital relations and introduces into his system disorder and disease.

Indirectly every sin is a sin against love, for at the bottom of all sin lies selfishness, and that means the absence of love. Selfishness is the giant weed through which so many gardens of the heart have been overgrown and stifled. It is through selfishness or love for self that we become slaves of habit and appetites. Every indulgence is weakness. As there are no "small enemies", so there are no "innocent indulgences". Life to its minutest details is divided between ends and means. Eating, drinking, sleeping, waking, dressing, rest and activity can all be employed either as means or as ends. To eat to live is to subordinate the means to the end; to live to eat, the reverse; and so all along the whole line of bodily and mental activities. The selfish individual gradually becomes isolated and inaccessible to the world-flow of love and sympathy. If not made to turn from that path, the selfish soul will become devitalized and perish in its self-created solitude.

A most pregnant cause for selfish indulgence lies in man's mistake in regarding his body as personal property, while the truth is that the body is given to us as an instrument for the attainment of universal and humanitarian ends. To use this costly agency in the service of personal habits and appetites, often contrary to the true welfare of man, is an unholy act and a violation of the most sacred principle of trust. No man upon due reflection will regard as personal property the body with which he has been trusted. For ownership involves either purchase or self-production,

and by none of these means has the body come into our possession. In fact we are almost entire strangers to our bodies, and the most vital and important of our bodily operations proceed without our knowledge.

The body has been given to us in trust. Not the owner of the body, but its mere steward, man shall have to render account for every expenditure of its energy. Habits of personal indulgences involve bodily expenditures for which the universe has received no equivalents in service. The removal of personal habits must therefore be of the greatest consequences for him who seeks freedom from Karmic bondage for himself and others. Only a few people become conquerors in the noble and truly heroic warfare against passions and desires. To fight is not the most important feature in successful warfare. Often has inaction wrought deeper consequences than action, and some of the greatest of the world's victories have been won not so much by doing as by refusing to do. To fight a habit is useless, as the violent concentration of thought which the struggle involves in place of weakening the habit, adds to its tenacity and strength. The safer method must therefore consist in refusing to engage. Realizing that the habit depends entirely on our thoughts for its support, we have in our power to starve it into submission.

Purity of thought is the panacea for all diseases of the soul, the lever by which the individual may lift himself out of the region of Karmic adjustment into the sphere of eternal, untainted, unruffled being. Like a spider which climbs up and down the threads spun by himself, so the soul speeding onward through time and space weaves the fabric of his own destiny and builds the bridge which is to connect time with eternity. Knowledge is the main spring of evolution; yet not knowledge for its own sake,

which is sterile and profitless, but knowledge for humanity's sake. The soul is full of knowledge, but it is a knowledge in cipher, the key to which lies in self-forgetting service to man.

LOVING SERVICE OF GOD

By Fenelon. 17th Century

The more you do for God, the more He will do for you; and every step you advance in the right road will fill your heart with fresh peace and consolation. That very perfection of which people are so much afraid, for fear it should be an irksome restraint, is only perfection in so far as it increases the will to do right. And in proportion as our work increases, weariness and tedium disappear; for one is never wearied of doing that which one likes to do. When one does an irksome thing out of strong love, that love softens the hardship and makes one willing to suffer. One would not be relieved by any shortcoming of that love; it is rather a pleasure to sacrifice one's self to the beloved object. And so the nearer we approach to perfection, the more we are satisfied to follow that which we love.

What more would you ask than to be always satisfied and never to bear any cross save one which is more acceptable than the contrary pleasures? But you will never find such satisfaction while yielding to your passions, nor will it ever fail you when you are earnestly seeking God. It is true that this satisfaction is not always a sensible and lively one, such as we experience in worldly pleasures; but nevertheless it is very real, and far superior to any the world can give; and that because sinners always crave that which they have not, while those who are moved by the love of God desire merely that which they have. Their peace may sometimes be dry, and even tinged with bitterness, but yet

it is more grateful to the soul than the excitement of passion.

You cannot do better than so arrange your time as to read a short time every day, with some brief meditation, reviewing your weak points, considering your duties, seeking God, and acquiring the habit of familiar intercourse with Him. Happy will you be if you learn what it is to find love an occupation. It is no use to ask what those who love God do with Him. There is no difficulty in spending our time with a friend we love: our heart is always ready to open to Him; we do not study what we shall say to Him, but it comes forth without premeditation; we can keep nothing back; even if we have nothing special to say, we like to be with Him.

VESSELS OF GOLD AND CLAY

Indo-Aryan Wisdom

Gold vessels, broken, still as gold
we prize,
And wise men in adversity are wise;
But worthless men, when ruined, what
are they?
Vessels of clay when broken, are but
clay.

When the tank's water to the rice-field
flows,
It feeds the grass which by its channel
grows;
Thus for the sake of one good man, on
all
In this old world, the gracious rain-
drops fall.

The cobra, conscious of its poison,
hides:
Abroad the water-snake unfearing glides;
Thus they whose hearts hide guile, exposure fear,
But secrecy befits not the sincere.

Esteem not witless, nor with ease o'ercome,
That man whose lips with wise reserve are dumb;
At the sluice-head the stork, while fish play by,
All lifeless seems—till the right fish comes nigh.

REPORT

Answering to the call of Boston, Swami Paramananda left Ananda-Ashrama for his Boston Centre on April 7th, stopping at several cities on the way. The day of April 10th he spent in Chicago, speaking in the afternoon at a small informal gathering of friends old and new, who urged him to give more time on his return trip so that a large public meeting could be planned. From Chicago the Swami went to Louisville, where his students had arranged two lectures and a morning class. "The three meetings were good," writes one of these friends, "but Saturday morning was best, 'so intimate' as Swami said. His short talk on 'Silence' after reading the poem, was beautiful. I never enjoyed anything more."

The Swami's last stopping place was Cincinnati. Cincinnati has a special hold on his heart because of the ex-

ceedingly devoted group who live there. These faithful students meet once a week unfailingly, and by their eager efforts on the Swami's behalf, help to make his sojourn in their city happy and successful. Several letters have come to the Ashrama from these members, giving glowing accounts of his recent visit. "It was estimated," runs one of the letters, "that Swami reached approximately twelve hundred people. I feel that no words can paint an adequate or true picture of the tremendous success of these meetings. Swami's message of hope, peace and love brought cheer and abiding consolation to many." Leaders of the Psychological movement in southern Ohio drove with friends all the way from Dayton to hear the Swami. Another member writes: "Of the many times that Swami has been with us, this has been by far the most successful in every respect. Every one who came in contact with him was thrilled with the outpouring of spirit through his message. I feel it was a great blessing to have had his presence in our midst. As I told a friend, now I know the true meaning of Christ's saying, 'My peace I leave with you.' "

The Swami reached Boston a few days before Easter and held his first public Service on Good Friday. At the Easter Service, lovely flowers and happy hearts gave him welcome to that Centre which was the first home of his work and for this reason must always have a unique place in his heart. Now that he is touching more lives in a wider field Boston, having made this extended work possible, cannot fail to share in the blessings which will flow from it. The Tuesday Class following Easter Sunday was almost like a second Easter, the flowers being still fresh and beautiful and the attendance unusually large. On April 29th, the Swami held a reception at the Centre for the purpose of telling his Boston friends of his work in California.

It was expected that during the Swami's absence the usual public Services and Classes would be continued at Ananda-Ashrama. Fate decreed otherwise. Owing to the disease prevalent among live stock in California, the Federal Government declared a strict quarantine on all the National Forest Reserve in Los Angeles County in order to protect the wild game. As a result Ananda-Ashrama, which was originally a part of the Reserve and which still comes under its regulations, was completely shut off from the public and is still, so to speak, in retirement. While the seclusion has been no hardship on the resident members, they have missed seeing their friends and have deeply regretted the interruption to the work.

On Easter Sunday in the early morning the members of the Ashrama met together out under the sky and held a special Service. The little altar beneath the trees, the fragrant flowers, the joyous song of innumerable birds, created an atmosphere of resurrection and new life which they wished many could have enjoyed. Not only Easter, but every Sunday, they come together for a Service at the regular hour. The public work of the Ashrama may be interrupted, but always the life of the Ashrama flows on, and the active work of development continues. The largest undertaking at present is the tunnelling for water. Already the mountain has been penetrated nearly 100 feet and all indications are that a large water supply will be forthcoming, sufficient for all the needs of the Ashrama now and in the future. Swami Paramananda expects to arrive at the Ashrama on May 21st. The quarantine will be lifted by that time and all the public activities will be resumed. The Swami will hold his first public Service on Sunday, the 25th, and the Services will continue without interruption throughout the summer. It is expected that the building of the chapel, auditorium and library will be begun very soon after the Swami's return.

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GIFT
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VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

JUNE, 1924

DIVINE INSPIRATION

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

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DIVINE INSPIRATION

By Swami Paramananda

DIVINE inspiration comes quietly, so quietly that the individual is scarcely aware of its presence. It comes without any ostentation, yet the benediction it brings is unspeakably rich. Do not think even for a moment that it is only poets, artists, musicians and spiritual teachers who need inspiration and that the average man has nothing to do with it. In the entire humanity there is not one who can make his life a true contribution either to himself or to his fellow-beings without proper inspiration. When we lack it, life falls upon us as a heavy load. There are many in this world of ours who work, who fulfill their duties, but they feel the weight of them. They do them with a sense of drudgery; but we can perform our daily tasks with a very different feeling,—with love, with inspiration. We cannot undertake anything with love, exuberance and selfless devotion without its unfolding for us. We learn from that task every step of the way. We can never escape from the dead weight of life until we have this awakening.

Inspiration! It is a divine guidance; it is the greatest heritage of man. It fills all our drudgery full of love, beauty and upliftment. Unfortunately we often regard spiritual themes as something apart from our every-day life. In our

daily activities we may not find the same possibilities for inspiration as we find in the lives of the master-spirits of the world. But why are they master-spirits? How have they become so great? Is their destiny specially mapped out for them; or have they made it possible for the great divine Power to flow through them? You know how it is if you neglect a mirror for days, weeks or perhaps months. Although the mirror still has the quality of reflecting, it does not reflect clearly and often even it distorts. Likewise when the surface of water is calm, clear and not agitated by wind, we see the clear reflection of our own image, or of trees, clouds, birds, of whatever comes near it. Are these not good illustrations of the human mind and heart? We long to accomplish great things in life; but in our haste and ambition, we altogether overlook the fact that unless our mind is serene, our heart fit for reflecting the Divine, we shut ourselves off from higher inspiration. Although we may work with our hands and our feet, if our mind is over-active and feverish with anxiety, nothing is accomplished. Often we bring about just the opposite result to that which we have set our heart upon.

These things do not happen by accident. It is not that a man achieves success through chance. He does not find poetry pouring out of his soul by chance, he does not become beatified through chance. It is all, directly or indirectly, the sum total of what we are. We can make ourselves so susceptible to higher influences that no matter what comes before us we draw inspiration from it, as we see in the soul of a poet or mystic. A poet comes in contact with a tree or a rock, a river, a brook, a bird or a beast and it speaks to him. Everything speaks to him. Because he has a living soul, all Nature becomes living. But the man who is unconscious of this living soul within and

whose thoughts and aspirations are not in harmony with that living soul, blocks the way to its expression. There is a great difference between one individual and another. It does not necessarily follow that when we are full of keen calculation, when we are very shrewd, that we are going to have inspiration. On the contrary, we sometimes hinder its manifestation through our calculation. When there is too much self-assertion, especially if the selfish aspect of our life is dominant, then that pure light cannot shine through us.

We individuals have a great deal to do with our life's unfoldment, with its success or failure. One who consciously or perhaps unconsciously, holds unkind, uncharitable thoughts, do you suppose his prayers will make him holy? Or that just because he professes an exalted creed he is going to gain true inspiration? No, a man may go on living quietly, humbly, without ostentation, without recognition; but if his heart is pure, if his soul is cleansed of all its selfish aspect, he will kindle the divine spark within him.

This brings a strange dilemma to our mind. If every man possesses the divine spark within, if every man has descended from that universal, cosmic Spirit, what difference can it make whether he knows it or not? There is a great difference between consciously possessing that great spiritual force and being unaware of it. No one can rob us of our immortality, no one can deprive us of our divine heritage; and yet we are deprived of it. A man may have inherited a fortune, yet if he is not aware of it or has no conscious control over it, it will do him no good. He will suffer just as though he did not possess it; he will worry and fret and sometimes even go through the agony of poverty. Same way is it with our life. We may have read in the Bible or in some holy code that we are all descendants

of one great Spirit, one infinite Being; but it avails us nothing unless we know it for ourselves; and without inspiration who can know about divine things? Going to church or professing a creed does not make us religious, not even though we are willing to fight for our creed, as many fanatics do in this world. Without inspiration every step of our way is fraught with danger. Our working life becomes very arduous. In our office, for instance, work hangs heavy over us; we feel the burden of it; we carry it like a great cross. Sometimes we curse our destiny, curse humanity and make life hideous. But one who knows how to carry that cross, glorifies it, just as we see in the example of Christ and in the example of all great saints, mystics and men of genius.

Often we come across people who are forever finding fault. They find fault with themselves, with their friends, with every one. Because their experience in this world has been full of evil, they trust no one. Full of suspicion, full of doubt, failure falls upon them at every step. In spite of all the religion they profess, they have no faith and their life becomes a mockery. Then again we come in contact with one who beautifies all things; whatever he touches breathes life and seems to give forth fragrance. This is not through chance. We all have the power to make ourselves channels for the divine Light, and also we can block the light in such measure that not only do we live in agony and despondency ourselves, but we throw that weight upon others. Some people make us feel that the only way out of life's unhappiness is through suicide. Others again fill us with enthusiasm, inspire us. Even in the midst of despair they give us the feeling that we can overcome all obstacles. Moments come when we have great difficulties; life presents a gruesome aspect; everything seems to go

wrong and we face discouragement and failure. Should we settle down and accept defeat as a final thing?

There are two ways of looking at life. Some look at it as a material creation. They recognize its changing aspects and take only the facts which come through sense-evidence. When there is a stormy day with hours that are dark and threatening, they feel that the sun is never going to shine again. People of this nature magnify their troubles by brooding over them. But there are those who, no matter what troubles confront them, pierce through the veil of darkness and find their way beyond the clouds. Such is the nature of inspiration. It is like a divine spark. It is not something which comes to us with noise. That is why many of us miss it entirely. We are used to noise, used to hearing only that which is given with loud clamour. But there are things given subtly, which we do not perceive. That is why the individual should cultivate his finer perception, his subtler sense of hearing and sight. We can so train our mind and heart that we can hear the voice of the Unseen and are able to contact that which our physical senses cannot discern.

In one of the great Hindu classics there is an illustration of the coming of inspiration. One day as the sage and immortal poet Valmiki was going with his disciple to bathe in the river, he saw two birds playing happily together. He was rejoiced at their happiness when suddenly a hunter shot the male bird, causing the female bird to cry out in agony of soul. This shot not only pierced the heart of the little bird, it went to the heart of the sage, so that he broke forth in unaccustomed utterance: "O thou cruel hunter, success will never be thine, for thou hast caused the destruction of an innocent, love-intoxicated bird." Astounded at the beauty, the music and the power of his

words, he turned to his disciple and asked, "What is this, my son? Have you ever before heard me speak in such lines?" "No Sire," replied the disciple. Again another Sanskrit verse came flowing through him, without any conscious seeking on his part for grandeur of language, rhythm or beauty. Then a voice told him the Spirit of the universe had bestowed upon him the gift of inspiration and he was appointed to write the life of great Rama, the ideal of manhood; and this book would not live just for a time and then be forgotten. "As long as the mountains shall exist," declared the voice, "as long as sun and moon shall shine and the rivers flow upon the earth, so long will people derive inspiration from thy gift"; and it was true. Indian history has proved it. In India children are brought up under the inspiration of the sage Valmiki. It was like a clarified stream flowing through him.

There is a great difference between what we do through force of circumstance and that which comes spontaneously, flowing from within. We all know this. We may not always be able to do everything spontaneously, but why should we kill our spontaneity? That is one of the greatest tragedies of our modern life. We are always trying to crush down what is innate, what is pure, what is lovely, what is subtle; and we are forever running after that which is full of noise, glamour and ostentation. In this way we are deprived of the more beautiful aspect of our life. What we need is balance. It is not that we should all become visionary and sit with folded hands, waiting until we have inspiration. It does not come to us that way, but only as we make ourselves harmonious through our thought, our aspiration and our actions.

It is the divine right of every one of us to tune ourselves in such a way that we can draw from the divine Source.

Are we not all children of the One? If we are not conscious of that, it makes no difference what religion we profess. It may have a big sounding name. We may be able to quote from the Bible, from the sacred classics, from all the loftiest sentiments of the world, but are we those things? Have we united ourselves with those feelings? Are we able to express them through our actions, our words and our silent thoughts? If at present we are unable to do this, it does not mean that we are incapable of it. We must always make a start, no matter where we stand, and we must not start with a negative feeling. There is a very great difference in this respect between the Indo-Aryan message and the Semitic teachings. This difference rests in the emphasis laid upon the two aspects of life. The Indian sages tried to inspire their followers not so much by emphasizing the existence of sin and iniquity, but rather by bringing out that which is the opposite of sin. "Hear, ye children of immortal bliss!" There is something very majestic in that call.

It does not require any great genius to find fault with others; we can all of us do that. We can convince them that they are worthless, immersed in sin and sorrow. But this does not save a soul. When a man becomes conscious of his worthlessness, he sinks deeper and deeper; but when he becomes conscious that he has a saving grace within him, that he has a soul which is part of Divinity, and that not to rise with it is a disgrace, then he is redeemed. This does not require any creed-bound faith; rather it requires the consciousness of that great Principle within and the desire to know that Principle. When we know it, we become incapable of harming or condemning any one. We find unity with our brethren and love for all human beings. Not only that, our love extends to all things living and

unliving. We become more tender towards animals, more conscious of beauty in natural scenery and in surrounding objects. They become living, they bring us rest.

A man bereft of inspiration, a man wholly dependent on material surroundings for his recreation, feels lost if he is left alone. He is wholly dependent on outer things. That one, however, who has found his access within, when he is left alone not only does he not feel lonely, he rejoices. The hours of solitude become rich for him. No matter where we are placed or how we are placed, if we are possessed of that inner awakening, we are never lonely and our life is never unfruitful. It is something we must try to develop and we do this by cultivating the sense of divine Presence. When we deal with material cold facts, we bring a living quality of lightness and inspiration into them. This we must do for ourselves; it cannot be mapped out for us by others. It is our own attitude of mind which either gives us access to these higher things, these subtler provinces, or blocks our way. Let us perform our task with cheerfulness, light-heartedness and exuberance of spirit; then perform the same task with depressed feeling, with a morose and melancholy attitude; and compare the results. The work performed with the light of understanding and cheerful aspect, is invariably the better done. Whenever we undertake anything with a sense of weight, doubt and despondency, we might as well not undertake it because it cannot be successful. If we carry life as though it were a dead weight, with unbelief and suspicion, the results will be negative; but if we undertake our tasks, our obligations and spiritual duties with faith, with divine inspiration, then not only shall we do our duties well, we shall draw constantly a fresh supply of life, a fresh supply of strength. What depletes man in his living is not so much

over-work as lack of the sustaining Power. Excessive work may exhaust our energy and nervous force; but it is working without inspiration that breaks us. That is the real cause. It breaks the machine of our life. Our life's machine runs smoothly and successfully only when we oil it with love and inspiration. Let us remember this every hour that we live. If we carry with us this subtle sense of a higher Presence, not only when we are reading the Bible or praying before our altar, but at all times, and if we can open ourselves so that that great Power can flow through us, we shall never lack for anything. This is what the mystics call inspiration. By wiping out all selfishness, egotism and calculation from our hearts, we can make of ourselves open channels through which the divine Power can flow, just as it flowed through Valmiki. He did not know he was writing poetry, he had no desire to become an immortal personage, and because of that he became immortal.

Let us do our tasks without thought of self. Let us quiet our ambition. Ambition is a great drawback to true inspiration. Too much of it creates fever in the soul. When that fever of self-love and selfishness, that eager desire to be somebody, surges within us, it defeats our life and its purpose. Let us be silent like the flower, waiting patiently. Then inspiration will fall like the dewdrop, all unaware, and we shall see the fruition. The bud will come to blossoming, full of fragrance, full of beauty. And this is our life. If we have a task to perform, let us do it tranquilly. Whether the world notices us or not should not be our concern. Our consideration should be first and foremost what we are able to give, how fully we can give and how completely we can put ourselves aside. Out of this richness of gift we shall never fail to receive richness of inspiration and blessing.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

HE wind of God's grace is incessantly blowing. Lazy sailors on this sea of life do not take advantage of it. But the active and the able always keep their minds unfurled to catch the friendly breeze, and they reach their destination very soon.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

Higher vision is the life of blessed gods and of godlike men, a renunciation of earthly joy, a deliverance from earthly sorrow, a flight of the self to the One.—*Plotinus.*

Whate'er we leave to God, God does,
And blesses us;
The work we choose should be our own,
God leaves alone.

—*Thoreau.*

Whether we are directors or guides, still do we want to be guided on account of the infancy of our steps. We are but solitary drops from the ocean of existence however much we possess of divine revelation and proof. I am far from the great reservoir of drops, convey me, O God, to the boundless ocean of light.—*Sahifah al Auliya.*

It must be that when God speaketh, He should communicate not one thing, but all things; should fill the world with His voice, should scatter forth light, nature, time, souls, from the centre of the present thought; and new date and new create the whole. Whenever a mind is simple and receives divine wisdom, then old things pass away—means, teachers, texts, temples fall; it lives now, and absorbs past and present into the present hour. All things are made sacred by relation to it,—one thing as much as another.—*Emerson.*

There are souls in this world which have the gift of finding joy everywhere and of leaving it behind them when they go.—*Faber.*

Fixt in an honorable purpose still, the brave preserve the same unconquered will; indifferent to fortune, good or ill. —*Theognis, 6th century B. C.*

Others shall take patience, courage to their heart and hand from thy hand and thy heart and thy brave cheer; and God's grace fructify through thee to all.—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

My heart is filled with devotion to Thee, O Sovereign Lord. Do Thou grant me such understanding that I may be able to offer at Thy Feet my humble praise. Thou abidest in all, Thou art all, Thou assumest all forms; all are from Thee, hence Thou art all, the Soul of all. Glory unto Thee, the Lord of all beings.—*Srimad-Bhagavata.*

THE KINGDOM WITHIN

By Hans Denck

(German Mystic. 16th century.)

God forces no one, for love cannot compel, and God's service is therefore a thing of complete freedom.

To hear the Word of God means life; to hear it not means death.

The thing which hinders and has always hindered is that our wills are different from God's Will. God never seeks Himself and His willing, we do. There is no other way to blessedness than to lose one's self-will.

The kingdom of God is in you and he who searches for it outside himself will never find it; for apart from God no one can either seek or find God, for he who seeks God, already in truth has Him.

Oh, who will give me a voice that I may cry aloud to the whole world that God, the All-Highest, is in the deepest abyss within us and is waiting for us to return to Him. Oh, my God, how does it happen in this poor old world, that Thou art so great and yet nobody finds Thee; that Thou callest so loudly and nobody hears Thee; that Thou art so near and nobody feels Thee; that Thou givest Thyself to everybody and nobody knows Thy name! Men flee from Thee and say they cannot find Thee; they turn their backs and say they cannot see Thee; they stop their ears and say they cannot hear Thee.

The Word of God is with thee before thou seekest; He gives before thou hast asked; He opens to thee before thou hast knocked.

It is not enough that God is in thee; thou must also be in God; that is, partake of the life of God. It does not help to have God, if thou dost not honour Him. It is no avail to call thyself His child, if thou dost not behave thyself like a child.

All externals must yield to love, for they are for the sake of love, and not love for their sake.

The holy Scriptures I consider above every human treasure, but not so high as the Word of God which is living, powerful and eternal; for it is God Himself, spirit and no letter, written without pen or paper so that it can never be destroyed. For that reason, salvation is not bound up with the Scriptures, however necessary and good they may be for their purpose; because it is impossible for the Scriptures to make good a bad heart, even though it may be a learned one. A good heart, however, with a divine spark in it is improved by everything, and to such the Scriptures will bring blessedness and goodness.

FIRE OF TRUTH

By Swami Paramananda

Master:

When the Fire of Truth burns in the heart,
it purifies the heart.
When its spark comes out of tongue,
it is vibrant with light.
Lo, it falls upon the ear that is not closed
to the subtle, spiritual sound,
like far-distant music,
Rousing the soul to a new world.
Fire of Truth—when it burns in the heart,
it purifies the heart.
When it burns in the mouth, it purifies
the mouth,
It purifies mind, body and glorifies the soul.

Disciple:

Compassionate Sire, what nature is this Fire?
Teach me how to kindle it.

Master:

It is flame without smoke;
It burns without fuel, save what is not visible
to the eyes.
It burns in the mouth of the wise.
It dwells in the heart of love.
It is the perpetual altar fire where saints
pour their oblation of worship.
It is eternal life.
It dwells in thee, though thou knowest it not;
dormant, hidden at thy inmost recess.
When thy uncovered heart will catch the spark
that comes out from the mouth that
speaks the Fire of Truth,
Then will be lighted in thee this smokeless,
eternal Flame.

FOUR PATHS OF YOGA

Hitherto unpublished article by Swami Vivekananda

(The following article was the second of three written by Swami Vivekananda with his own hand during his first visit in America to answer questions put by a Western disciple. This disciple kept them for his private use until recently when he passed them over for publication in the "Message". The first appeared in the February number.)

Our main problem is to be free. It is evident then that until we realize ourselves as the Absolute, we cannot attain to deliverance. Yet there are various ways of attaining to this realization. These methods have the generic name of Yoga (to join), to join ourselves to our reality. These Yogas, though divided into various methods, can principally be classed as four; and as each is only a method leading indirectly to the realization of the Absolute, they are suited to different temperaments. Now it must be remembered that it is not that the assumed man becomes the real man or Absolute. There is no becoming with the Absolute. It is ever free, ever perfect; but the ignorance that has covered its nature for a time is to be removed. Therefore the whole scope of all systems of Yoga (and each religion represents one) is to clear up this ignorance and allow the *Atman* to restore its own nature. The chief helps in this liberation are *Abhyasa* and *Vairagyam*. *Vairagyam* is non-attachment to life, because it is the will to enjoy that brings all this bondage in its train; and *Abhyasa* is constant practice of any one of the Yogas.

1. *Karma-Yoga.* This Karma is purifying the mind by means of work. Now if any work is done, good or bad, it must produce as a result a good or bad effect; no power can stay it, once the cause is present. Therefore good action producing good Karma, and bad action, bad Karma, the soul will go on in eternal bondage without ever hoping for deliverance. Now Karma belongs only to the body or

the mind, never to the *Atman;* only it can cast a veil before the *Atman.* The veil cast by bad Karma is ignorance. Good Karma has the power to strengthen the moral powers and thus creates non-attachment; it destroys the tendency towards bad Karma and thereby purifies the mind. But if the work is done with an intention of enjoyment, it can only produce that very enjoyment and does not purify the mind or *chitta.* Therefore all work should be done without any desire to enjoy the fruits thereof. All fear and all desire to enjoy here or hereafter must be banished forever by the Karma-Yogi. Moreover this Karma without desire of return will destroy the selfishness which is the root of all bondage. The watchword of the Karma-Yogi is "not I, but Thou", and no amount of self-sacrifice is too much for him. But he does this without any desire to go to heaven, or to gain name or fame or any other benefit in this world. Although the explanation and rationale of this unselfish work is only in Gnana-Yoga; yet the natural divinity of man makes him love all sacrifice, simply for the good of others, without any ulterior motive, whatever his creed or opinion. Again with many the bondage of wealth is very great; and Karma-Yoga is absolutely necessary for them as breaking the crystallization that has gathered round this love of money.

Next is *Bhakti-Yoga.* Bhakti or worship or love in some form or other is the easiest, pleasantest and most natural way of man. The natural state of this universe is attraction and that is surely followed by an ultimate disunion. Even so, love is the natural impetus of union in the human heart; and though itself a great cause of misery, properly directed towards the proper object, it brings deliverance. The object of Bhakti is God. Love cannot be without a subject and an object. The object of love again must be a

being at first who can reciprocate our love. Therefore the God of love must be in some sense a human God. He must be a God of love. Aside from the question whether such a God exists or not, it is the truth that to those who have love in their heart this Absolute appears as a God of love, as personal.

The lower forms of worship, which embody the idea of God as a judge or punisher or some one to be obeyed through fear, do not deserve to be called love, although they are forms of worship gradually expanding into higher forms. We pass on to the consideration of love itself. We will illustrate love by a triangle, of which the first angle at the base is fearlessness. So long as there is fear, it is not love. Love banishes all fear. A mother with her baby will face a tiger to save her child. The second angle is love that never asks, never begs. The third or the apex is love that loves for the sake of love itself. Even the idea of object vanishes. Love is the only form in which love is loved. This is the highest abstraction and the same as the Absolute.

Next is *Raja-Yoga.* This Yoga fits in with every one of these Yogas. It fits inquirers of all classes, with or without any belief, and it is the real instrument of religious inquiry. As each science has its particular method of investigation, so is this Raja-Yoga the method of religion. This science also is variously applied according to various constitutions. The chief parts are the *Pranayamas,* concentration and meditation. For those who believe in God, a symbolical name, received from a Guru, will be very helpful, such as *Om* or other sacred words. *Om* is the greatest, meaning the Absolute. Meditating on the meaning of these holy names and repeating them is the chief practice.

Next is *Gnana-Yoga.* This is divided into three parts.

First: hearing—that the *Atman* is the only reality, everything else is *Maya* (relativity). Second: reasoning upon this philosophy from all points of view. Third: giving up all farther argumentation and realizing the truth. This realization consists in first being certain that Brahman is real and everything else unreal; second, giving up all desire of enjoyment; third, controlling the mind; fourth, intense desire to be free. Meditating on this reality always and reminding the soul of its real nature are the only ways in this Yoga. It is the highest, but the most difficult. Many persons get an intellectual grasp of it, but very few attain realization.

RULES FOR DAILY LIVING

By St. Francis de Sales

(Bishop of Geneva. 17th century.)

Do not be eager to find out whether you are in the path of perfection or not, and that for two reasons. First, because, if we were quite perfect, we should not know or believe it, but regard ourselves as most imperfect; there is no need to examine as to whether we are imperfect; how can we doubt it? Nor should we be astonished or disheartened at our own imperfection, but rather humbled; for thus we shall learn to correct our faults and improve gradually, which is one main use of imperfections; nor are they to be dealt with as sins. Again, all such eager research, if made with anxiety and perplexity, is pure waste of time; just as though soldiers, while awaiting a battle, were to weary themselves by sham fights with one another; or musicians were to practise till they were too hoarse to sing; a perpetual self-inspection wearies the mind, and renders it incapable of action when really necessary. This is the first rule I would give you.

The second is in our Saviour's words, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Simplify your judgment, do not indulge in so many questionings and replies; but go on quietly and in confidence. Let there be nought to you in this world save God and yourself; all else should not be able to touch you, except as He may command. I intreat you not to look so much hither and thither; keep your eye fixed on God and yourself, and you will never see aught save goodness in Him, unworthiness in yourself; but you will also see His goodness mindful of your unworthiness, and your worthless self the object of His goodness and mercy. Therefore keep your eyes firmly, resolutely fixed thereon; and let the rest go by with a passing glance. Moreover, do not dwell overmuch on what others do, or how they advance; look upon them with a single, kindly, loving eye; do not expect perfection in them any more than in yourself, and do not be surprised at the various forms of imperfection which you meet; imperfections are not more imperfect because they are unwonted. Imitate the bee, which gathers honey from all manner of flowers.

My third rule is, that you strive to be as a little child, who, while its mother holds it, goes on fearlessly, and is not disturbed because it stumbles and trips in its weakness. So long as God holds you up by the will and determination to serve Him, with which He inspires you, go on boldly and do not be frightened at your little checks and falls, so long as you can throw yourself into His arms in trusting love. Go there with an open, joyful heart as often as possible; if not always joyful, at least with a brave and faithful heart. God would have us serve Him by loving Him above all. This is enough; it must be done in simple faith.

DIVINE LOVE

Jacopone da Todi

Love, Thou didst enter very softly in
To hold this heart of mine.
No sound, no stir, no sign!
How couldst Thou cross my threshold all unseen?

O Love adorable, with sweetness fraught,
O Love delectable,
Love inconceivable,
Outstripping knowledge and surpassing thought!

O Love Thou fire divine, of laughter spun;
Love that art smile and jest,
Thou giv'st us of Thy best,
Thy wealth unmeasured that is never done.

O sweet and gentle Love, Thou art the key
Of heaven's city and fort;
Steer Thou my ship to port,
And from the tempest's fury shelter me.

O Love, how stainless and how pure Thou art!
How jocund and how wise,
How high, how deep Thy guise,
To him who gives Thee gladly all his heart!

Love, it was Thou Thyself that didst inspire
My heart to love Thee first;
An-hungered and athirst,
Thy lover longed, with very great desire.

IMPRESSIONS OF ANANDA-ASHRAMA

By Marion Forster Gilmore

It nestles in the arms of the Sierra Madre Range like a smiling child held close to its mother's breast. The winds are its playmates and they sing it strange wild songs of the mountains and the sea; the sapphire sky of California smiles down upon it and the bright valley of La Crescenta lies dreaming at its feet.

At the time of my visits there, in February and early March, the rains had not begun. Each day was a dream of radiant skies and golden light. The wild flowers, delayed by the long drought, had not made their appearance, but the gardens were aglow with roses, marigolds, pansies and geraniums, and vines and shrubs were bowers of brilliant bloom. The trip from Los Angeles to the little town of La Crescenta, where the Ashrama motors meet the Tujunga stage, always seemed to me like an exquisite prelude to the culminating glory of the Retreat. It is an eighteen mile drive through wide, sun-flooded lands, past veritable Gardens of Hesperides, shining with golden fruit, between brown foothills, into the majestic sanctuary of the "Mother Mountains", as the name "Sierra Madre" tenderly signifies. How strange, yet how profoundly fitting, that they should now cradle in their arms a Peace Retreat where the mother aspect of the Infinite One receives especial veneration!

From a great distance along the road that winds through the lovely valley, the red-tiled roof of the Ashrama dwelling house is visible, a splash of burning color against the mountain slope. On the edge of the natural platform on which the building stands, five hundred feet above the valley, are two acacia trees. When in blossom, they shine like celestial beacons, kindled to guide Ashrama pilgrims to their goal. The nearer one approaches, the more marvel-

lous the splendor of their living gold appears. Their ethereal effect is enhanced by the fairylike delicacy of their leaves and blossoms.

I enjoyed the privilege of spending a day and a night at Ananda-Ashrama, in addition to the Services I attended. My experience revealed to me something of the blessed meaning of a Peace Retreat. Spontaneous co-operation and joyfully consecrated activity are actual forces, not mere theories, in the daily life of the household. It is at once a wholesome, mutually helpful community and a family, bound by spiritual ties. In its outward aspect alone, the Ashrama blesses all who come within its boundaries with the legacy of a lovely memory. But the soul of its influence lies in the power and inspiration of the Swami's teachings and the atmosphere of love and service which pervades the consecrated place. Its visible glories are symbolical of the unseen Spirit working out its holy purpose there.

The Ashrama embraces one hundred and forty acres of mountain grandeur and rich fertility. Sage brush, oaks and pines cover the rugged slopes of the Sierra Madre Range and the Verdugo Hills across the valley. But the somewhat grim, though picturesque, effect of those wild growths is softened by the beauty of flowering fruit trees and shrubs, which lie, as it were, in the lap of the majestic Mother, for the delight of her young child.

Many of the shrubs and trees are exotics. The Australian eucalyptus is completely naturalized, but there are some that strike a foreign, yet in no sense a discordant note in the landscape's harmony. There are deodars whose dark boughs whisper of the far Himalayas as they stir in the mountain wind. And there are purple heather and yellow broom, suggestive of the Scotch and English moors and the fields of sunny France. The very vegetation is expressive

of the world-embracing spirit which prevails in this Retreat where East and West clasp hands.

The heather grows beside the front steps of the dwelling house. When I first saw it, it was a mass of stately purple flowers, swaying in the breeze. As I watched it, I imagined that each wee trembling bell was sending forth silvery tones too fine for any but an elfin ear. It is easy to put faith in innocent poetic fancies at Ananda-Ashrama. For its founder, Swami Paramananda, is a poet and its workers reverence Nature as the visible expression of the Master Poet.

Although the heather chimes are inaudible, there is a bell at the Retreat with a tongue of potent sweetness. Before every Service, Sister Devamata rings the antique Benares bell suspended in the porch. Richly, solemnly, with exquisite rhythm, its tones vibrate, calling the seekers of universal Truth to prayer and meditation.

At no great distance from the main building, there is a canyon which Swami Paramananda has chosen as the site for the outdoor auditorium. The sunlight slants through the dusky foliage of the oaks and the forest stillness falls like a benediction on the soul. It is a spot of primitive beauty and unforgettable wild solitude; of lovely flitting lights and shadows and healing silences. An ideal place for those impressive Services to the "God of the Open Air", which form so vital a part of the Swami's glorious vision.

In the meanwhile Services are held out of doors whenever the weather permits. Sublimely simple, they are deeply, utterly impressive. I shall never forget the one at which the Swami talked on "Spiritual Healing." As always his discourse was clear and practical and, so it seemed to me, even more than usually inspiring. On every hand, as if in confirmation of his words, Nature was offering the testi-

mony of her splendid life which with instinctive trust she draws from the one unfailing Source. Behind the Swami a radiant mass of acacia was banked. Overhead the eucalyptus boughs glowed with their soft crimson flowers. A majestic background was formed by the mountain, looming in rude grandeur against the cloudless sky.

From that benignant height a reservoir sends down its waters, gathered from perpetual mountain springs. Farther down the slope two dams conserve the priceless treasure, thus insuring an adequate supply of water even in times of severe drought. And so, as the superb architectural plans materialize, we may count with confidence on steadily increasing beauty and abundance in the orange, lemon and walnut groves, the orchards of pears, apricots and peaches, and the flower gardens. Already the dwelling house and cabins overlook a prospect of amazing charm and fruitfulness.

But it is only a suggestion of the glorious setting in which before long the Temple, Auditorium, and other buildings of Ananda-Ashrama will be enshrined.

Louisville, Ky. May, 1924.

REPORT

Fragments of time in Chicago between trains were well utilized on Swami Paramananda's recent journey to and from Boston. Eastward bound, he arrived in Chicago Thursday, April 10th, towards noon. Rev. Jane Priest, pastor of Third Illinois Church, had with the co-operation of Mrs. Nellie McCollum of Unity arranged an informal afternoon gathering at the Unity rooms in the Capitol building. The Swami's message proved deeply inspiring to those present. In the evening, he was able to greet early arrivals at Miss Priest's class before going to the train. Three meetings were arranged for the return visit on Sun-

day, May 18. In the morning Swami Paramananda spoke at Unity, giving a noble address on the essentials of the spiritual life. In the afternoon, a large congregation at Third Church in Warwick Masonic Temple enjoyed his lecture on "The Glory of Vision." It was noted that the discourse was marked by true illumination. A reception at the twilight hour followed at Bookfellow Lodge, the center for the Order of Bookfellows, Mr. and Mrs. George S. Seymour being the hosts. Here the Swami read from "The Vigil" and "Soul's Secret Door," and answered carefully and with sympathy many searching and eager questions.

(Extract from letter written from Chicago.)

* * * * *

On Wednesday, May 21st, almost coincident with the lifting of the quarantine, Swami Paramananda returned to California from Boston. The following Sunday he conducted the public Service at Ananda-Ashrama, speaking on "Constructive Thinking and Living." Almost immediately after the Swami's arrival, the final plans for the "Sisters' House" were brought to him for approval and steps were taken for the commencement of the actual building. Auditorium plans were also worked over and the site cleared of undergrowth. Thus this summer will be a time of construction. The rose garden, which three months ago was a bit of wild hillslope, now yields daily roses that are miracles of perfection, exquisite in contour and colour. The Chapel Garden, also recently redeemed from the wild is now a blaze of luxuriant growth, looking as though jewels had been sown there instead of seed. Thus improvements which at first were lost in the immensity of the Ashrama are now becoming evident, to the delight of all who come. The Sunday service at 3:30 P. M. and the Thursday evening class at 8 will continue uninterruptedly at the Ashrama throughout the summer.

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Message of the East

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UNFOLDMENT FROM WITHIN

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Along that highway which is full of the stir and crash of Kipling, the splendid, brutal quality of Masefield, and myriad, poignant, careless colors of Noyes, this reposeful, white gleam is at least amazing. Here is no contact with the physical, in any sense of the word. Its strain is purely spiritual with no suggestion of that quality as glimpsed in man, but only as it is felt in a soul that has become sensitive to the real in unrealities.

The book should be recommended to Americans because it will open up to them a philosophy of repose that is entirely foreign to this land.—*Evening Outlook, Santa Monica (Calif.)*

These songs are the chants of child-like faith, clothed in all the austerity and beauty that mark the Holy Scriptures themselves.—*Times-Star, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

When Swami Paramananda's earlier volume, "Soul's Secret Door," was published, no one who read it failed to recognize its sincerity, its beauty, its surpassing calm. The present book, it seems to me, is even a higher accomplishment. It has carried the splendid growth of the earlier verse to a more splendid fruition. It is amazing what this Oriental writer can do with vers libre. Would that our own professional writers of free verse could come within miles of him; but, perhaps, that is too much to expect, for Swami Paramananda has a message! We are better for listening to it. What a great Christian he is, in spite of the fact that his religion is of the Orient. How good a thing it would be for America if all our professed ministers of Christ could write simply and sincerely, as this servant of God has done.—*Enquirer, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

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MAKER OF THE BEAUTIFUL

By Swami Paramananda

IT is beauty I love.
Though like the foolish moth
Oft I burn my limbs in the flame;
Yet evermore my soul craves
its attainment.
Beauty in the rose draws my heart;
Beauty of dawn exalts my soul;
Stillness of the night fills me
with wonder;
Beauty of face and beauty of sight
Awaken in my soul love and ever
greater love.
In love and with love
I seek the Maker of the Beautiful.

(This poem was written on the train during the Swami's journey from Boston to Ananda-Ashrama in May, 1924.)

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

If you build upon anything or have confidence in anything which stands in time and is on this side Eternity and the Being of beings, your foundation will be swept away, and night will come upon you, and all your gathered-in things and taken-on and initiated will fail you—why gad you abroad? Why turn you yourselves with the saints' words, when you are ignorant of the life? Return, return to Him that is the first love, and the first born of every creature, who is the light of the world.—*Francis Howgill.* (*Leader of Westmoreland Seekers in England, 17th Century.*)

It has always been the persuasion of wise men that the moral law was not devised by men, nor introduced by them, but is an eternal law, to which the whole world must conform. Its ultimate basis is God, who commands and forbids.—*Cicero.*

What is God? Length, breadth, height and depth—God is designated One to suit our comprehension, not to describe His character. His character is capable of division, He Himself is not. The words are different, the paths are many, but one thing is signified; the paths lead to one Person.—*St. Bernard.*

There is one supreme Intelligence, Who acts with order, proportion and design; the Source of all that is good and just. He is the eternal living Being; the most noble of all beings, Who understands everything and gives motion to all things, continuing Himself immovable.—*Aristotle.*

O friend to virtue! that supreme Spirit which thou believest one and the same with thyself, resides in thy bosom

perpetually and is an all-knowing inspector of thy goodness or of thy wickedness.—*Manu.* (*Law-giver of ancient India.*)

Religion is a growth. Each one must experience it himself. The Christians believe that Jesus Christ died to save man. With you it is a belief in a doctrine, and this belief constitutes your salvation. With us doctrine has nothing whatever to do with salvation. Each one may believe in whatever doctrine he likes; or in no doctrine. What difference does it make to you whether Jesus Christ lived at a certain time or not? What has it to do with you that Moses saw God in the burning bush? The fact that Moses saw God in the burning bush does not constitute your seeing Him, does it? If it does, then the fact that Moses ate is enough for you; you ought to stop eating. One is just as sensible as the other. Records of great spiritual men of the past do us no good whatever except that they urge us onward to do the same, to experience religion ourselves.—*Swami Vivekananda.*

It is not enough to be industrious; so are the ants. What are you industrious about?—*Thoreau.*

Do that which you judge to be beautiful and honest, though you should acquire no glory from the performance, for the vulgar is a depraved judge of beautiful deeds.—*Demophilus.*

A sacred burden is this life ye bear.
Look on it, lift it, bear it solemnly,
Stand up and walk beneath it steadfastly;
Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin;
But onward, upward, till the goal ye win.

—*Frances A. Kemble.*

UNFOLDMENT FROM WITHIN

By Swami Paramananda

(Prayers and Talk given at Sunday Evening Service at the Chapel of the Vedanta Centre of Boston.)

Let us try to feel the All-abiding Presence within us. Let us open our hearts to the Supreme Spirit, that He may fill our hearts. Let us make our thoughts uplifted, tranquil and full of love. Let us send our loving thoughts and prayers to all our fellow-beings.

O Thou Supreme Spirit, Thou art eternally abiding; Thou art ever present in our hearts; Thou art the Source of our existence, the Root of our being. Make our hearts pure and free from all blemishes that we may feel Thy divine Presence in our hearts; that we may learn to love and forgive and rejoice in all Thy blessings in whatever form they come. O Thou All-Compassionate Spirit, grant unto us Thy loving and abiding protection and keep us ever in peace.

We often ask for a definite sign, that by seeing it we may believe and know; but what sign can really make us realize the Divine unless we have the understanding spirit, the unfoldment from within? How often people say, if we could see, we would believe. We can see only from our own level of vision; whether it is high or low depends on where we stand. The things pertaining to the spiritual plane we can see only when we are willing to lift ourselves from the material plane. Not only can we see them, we can retain the vision, its power and blessing; but we are not always willing to let go our hold on the material. We like to reap blessings, to have a sense of security. To some people religion provides that security, and it is for that reason they want to have some connection with it. But it gives much more than security. The spirit of religion is not merely to force people through fear into seeking for

some shelter or refuge. It is fundamentally the spirit of love. We love the beautiful, we love life, we love what is living and what makes for happiness. These are the things we seek, but in our seeking some of us go by round-about ways. We seek them in the material. We make the material the standard of life. This is where comes the stumbling block. We can never measure spiritual blessings from the material point of view; but we can enrich our material life by finding the fullness of spiritual blessing. It is not a question, however, of following a dogma or a creed. It cannot be accomplished by artificial means. It must come from within.

We can never pretend devotion to God. If we have it, we know we have it. Not only we know that we have it, we feel its blessing; it finds its expression even through our outer life, we do not need some one to tell us. This is something we must cultivate silently. As Christ often said: Pray in the closet, or as the Yogis in India teach their disciples: When you pray, let no one see you. When the whole world is asleep, wise men take that opportunity for prayer and meditation. Why? They do this not to mystify, but because they want direct access to the Divine, with no diversion, no distraction, no self-consciousness. Every human being has access to it. Our greatest misfortune comes when we begin to feel doubt of self, doubt of our ability to lift our heart in a direct line and see the face of Divinity. Why do we doubt? Are we not His children? What sign, what proof do we need to convince us of that? Nothing from outside can convince us of it unless we are convinced from within. The whole problem of the spiritual life is really cleansing from within, getting rid of the non-essential. All things must be made fresh. The greatest freshness we find comes through understanding. Great

souls remain unsoiled by the world. They are not contaminated, although they live in the world. They do not seem to lose their freshness. You may say they have not perhaps the same amount of worldly cares as we have. It is not that. They may have even more; as a rule they do have more than the average individual. Other people bring to them their troubles and their problems, but they know the secret of eternal freshness which is found in the Spirit.

As we come in contact with the spiritual Source, we are made fresh. We have eternal life. Once we taste that unbounded life which death cannot overcome, which no material condition can bury, we know life eternal. Christ's resurrection is the symbol of this. Every one of us has to rise; but we must not wait until we are nearly dead and have lost all power over the flesh. On the contrary, we should make use of every opportunity that is given into our hands to rise now. Every mortal must learn to rise through the power of the Spirit and dominate over the flesh, for flesh is the burial ground. Some people are so immersed in it, so overwhelmed by it, that life here is a burden for them; it even becomes a tragedy. We make it a tragedy by looking in the wrong direction. By turning our eyes in the right direction we find it is a source of unbounded blessing.

Life is ever giving us its blessing. As we keep our gaze fixed on the eternal light which is descending from God, as we unite ourselves with that, can we have any more doubt or fear of calamity? These come only when we allow ourselves to be twisted. Who does this? Have we really any enemy outside who plans to make us unhappy and to deprive us of this beautiful vision? No. Even if we did have such an enemy, he could not reach us. It is we ourselves who do it. Our egotism, our false ideas, our false identification, these are the enemies. We lay great importance on physical

life, we think that we truly live by the flesh; so naturally we have to go through the experience which belongs to the flesh. It is crushed; it dies; it is unstable; but the Spirit is ever living. If you have found the Spirit, then your very countenance will shine; your power will radiate even though you may not go out as a preacher. A burning lamp, wherever it is carried, gives its glow; it destroys the darkness; it throws light on the path. The same way it is with our life. The world is safe and also it is unsafe. It all depends on the individual. One who moves with the sense of safety and security, he knows through God-knowledge that he is ever safe. Not only is he safe, he is able to give safety to others. But one who enters into the world blindfolded, not in the literal sense, but with material ambition, with the sense of life as it is limited to the flesh, he knows no safety.

It is the soul which wears this body; and as long as we keep our spiritual line clear, open, vibrant, there is nothing that can thwart our course. The teaching of the Saviours, the great master-spirits of the world, is to revive us; to enable us to destroy all our fictitious notions that we are mortals, that we are weak, that we have to be sinful, and that we have not the power to rise above these conditions. We have the power. This is the call of the master-spirit: "Arise, awake and know that thou art part of the Infinite". "Be perfect as your Father which is in Heaven." That is resurrection. When we find our ascendancy, then we gain victory—victory over ourselves, victory over all that is ignoble and material, all that makes for contention and suffering. Some, even though they are living within this body, are already risen; and some are dead spiritually, although they may be living physically.

Let us be living. It is for the sake of the living that life

is to be enjoyed; not living in a morbid sense, but living with the glowing sense of the Spirit—that we are of God, that He lives with us, that He sustains us. We could not exist without Him. It is not true humility when we feel that we have no access to Godhead. On the contrary, we must always feel that we have access. Even though we may do something wrong, something ignoble, should we be afraid to show our face before that One who gives us life? When our moral fibre has become weakened by our distorted spirit of understanding, that is the greatest calamity. Until we can rise out of that, no amount of science can convince us that there is reality in spiritual existence. It is we who create our strength of vision; it is we who create our miseries, and it is we who have the power to rise above them and stay above them.

O Thou Infinite Spirit, Thou art ever near us.

It is through our lack of true vision that we are unable to see Thy face of beneficence.

Thou art ever speaking in our hearts, but our ears are so filled with the noise of the world that we are unable to hear Thy voice.

Thou art ever guiding us; through our egotism we fail to receive it and we shut our hearts to Thy divine blessing.

O Thou compassionate Spirit through Thy Grace all things are possible.

May we through Thy will find our access to Thy divine Being, that our hearts may be full of love and tolerance, a love that knows no hatred.

Give us such all-embracing love and make us one with Thy divine Spirit.

Thou art the embodiment of all blessedness.

Surround us with Thy protecting love and keep us ever in peace.

PATH OF DUTY

By Mencius. 4th Century B. C.

(Mencius or Mang-tsze was an eminent and ardent follower of Confucius, although he lived nearly 200 years later than his master. He was teaching in China when Aristotle was teaching in Greece.)

Man's natural tendency to good is like the tendency of water to flow downwards. There are none but have this tendency to good, just as all water flows downwards.

The path of duty lies in what is near, and men seek for it in what is remote. The work of duty lies in what is easy, and men seek for it in what is difficult.

Words which are simple, while their meaning is far-reaching, are good words. Principles which are held as compendious, while their application is extensive, are good principles. The words of the superior man are not necessarily high-sounding, but great principles are contained in them.

What future misery have they and ought they to endure who talk of what is not good in others?

Benevolence is man's mind and righteousness is man's path.

How lamentable is it to neglect the path and not pursue it, to lose the mind and not know to seek it again.

Men must be decided on what they will not do, then they are able to act with vigor in what they ought to do.

To nourish the heart there is nothing better than to make the desires few.

When Heaven is about to confer a great office on any man, it first exercises his mind with suffering and his sinews and bones with toil. It exposes his body to hunger, and subjects him to extreme poverty. It confounds his undertakings. By all these methods it stimulates his mind, hardens his nature, and supplies his incompetencies.

As to what the superior man would feel to be a calamity,

for him there is no such thing. He does nothing which is not according to propriety. If there should befall him one morning's calamity, the superior man does not account it a calamity.

The superior man has two things in which he delights and to be ruler over the empire is not one of them.

That his father and mother are both alive, and that the condition of his brothers affords no cause for anxiety: this is one delight. Then when looking up he has no occasion for shame before heaven, and below he has no occasion to blush before men: this is a second delight.

Beware. What proceeds from you will return to you again.

He who stops short where stopping short is not allowable, will stop short in everything. He who behaves shabbily to those whom he ought to treat well, will behave shabbily to all.

Heaven's plan in the production of mankind is this: that they who are first informed should instruct those who are later in being informed, and they who first apprehend principles should instruct those who are slower to do so. I am one of Heaven's people who first apprehended. I will take these principles and instruct this people in them.

He who works for Me, has Me for his highest goal, is devoted to Me, is free from attachment and bears enmity towards no creature, he enters into oneness with Me.

—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

God is veiled from the heart of the man who sees his own actions; God is veiled even from him who seeks recompense; and from him, who occupied with considering the benefit, turns his eyes from the Benefactor.—*Joneid.*

THE QUEST OF BEAUTY

By Sister Daya

This is the quest of beauty: to attempt to mirror in its perfection the one Reality. We may seem to be creators but all the time it is God creating through us. "O Arjuna, Ishwara, (the Lord) dwells in the heart of all beings, causing all beings to revolve, as if mounted on a wheel. O Bharata, take refuge in Him with all thy heart; through His grace thou shalt attain supreme peace and the eternal abode." The Lord, Ishwara, is the Poet; the Lord, Ishwara, is the Artist; the Lord, Ishwara, is the Creator. He it is that worketh in us; beyond Him there is nothing.

Once, so runs the legend, the Great God who bears the crescent moon in His hair, sat with Uma His divine Consort, on the snowy peak of Kailas. He was trying to cajole her from a jealous mood by telling her a story. She had just settled down to listen when they saw a tiny black form moving up the icy slopes of the mountain, like an ant amid blocks of salt. "Who are you, and what do you want?" thundered the Great God. The man, for so it was, fell trembling on his face. "Have mercy!" he cried, "I am only a poor *kathaka* (story-teller) to a great Raja. For years I have told him a new tale every night; but finally I positively could think of nothing new and in his displeasure he threatens me and all my family with death if I do not produce a perfectly new story within a given time. In my despair I have come seeking the Great God who alone is the Author of all the stories that have ever been told or ever will be told."

"Now this is most fortunate," said the Great God. "You have arrived precisely at the right moment for I was just going to begin a tale, so listen attentively and all your troubles will be over." At that he picked the mortal up

and set him in His hair. Then He began His story. The details of it do not matter. A prince robbed of his throne cursed all the gods but Lakshmi,—the Goddess of Love, Beauty and Fortune,—for she alone so he held, possessed real power. From that moment he fell under her favor and under the disfavor of the other gods. She sought to protect him and they swore to destroy him. Again and again they laid snares for him but always Lakshmi, armed with her weapon of beauty, came out victorious and mocked them.

Finally in a rage they sought out her Lord, the adorable Hari, determined to discipline her for her wilfulness. They found Hari dreamily sitting on a lotus leaf in the midst of the infinite ocean of space. He listened to their complaints and then whispered Lakshmi's name. Though it was but a whisper it vibrated through all the three worlds. At that call the Lotus-eyed rose from the sea, standing poised on the back of a tortoise, all tender grace and beauty, her slender, incomparable body wrapped in her dripping hair. As she stood there ineffably lovely, Hari turned to the Gods, but not one was left. How could they or any one accuse such a beauty of anything whatsoever, much less demand her punishment. With a smile Hari summoned her to Him and sinking down beside Him in that endless expanse, she gently rubbed His feet with the lotus of her hand.

"Now," said the Great God, taking the man from His hair, "There is your story; go and tell it to the king." But the man fell at His feet. "Great God, have mercy!" he cried, "Grant me one more boon, I implore Thee! Make it possible for me to look, if only for a moment, on that Beauty of beauties." "Is not that just like mortals?" said Ishwara, "Never satisfied! It were far better for this wretched man not to have this boon but nevertheless I shall grant it. Uma,

summon Lakshmi!" Then that Great God directed the man to look fixedly on the white peaks just where they cut the deep blue of the sky and as he gazed into that immense profundity suddenly there flashed before him a vision of loveliness that severed his soul from his body and he dropped dead even as he gazed into the unfathomable eyes of Beauty. The Great God, picking up the body with His purifying hand, sent it whistling down through space to the plains below, but the man was reborn almost immediately and became a poet, who wandered ceaselessly, searching for a beauty he had once seen but could never find.

We have all had glimpses of that immortal beauty and we are all seeking to realize it in its fullness. But there are those who have gained either a more complete vision of it or else have retained the vision more vividly. Some seek it in form, some in love, some in goodness, some in religion; but all who have ever felt the drawing power of an ideal are lured on by the wonder in the eyes of the Lotus of the World. What ineffable comfort in our quest to know that only as we contain beauty within, may we see it without! We are what we feel and what we sense we shall become. Nature is a cup into which we pour our own beauty. When we appreciate an artist's work, we share his dream; when we thrill to nature or to a great ideal, we share God's dream. It is the divine promise. When we worship we are worshipping only that which essentially we are and consciously shall become. Humanity has not the power to long for a God that is separated from the human heart. Is not the cry of love always a cry for union? If we feel beauty and respond to it, then know for a certainty that the supreme Artist is hidden within us and we seek in outer things only the reflection of His face.

Is beauty then, but a state of consciousness? Has it noth-

ing to do with the external, with line and color and form? From the ultimate point of view there is no external or internal, there is only One; but from the relative view-point the inner and the outer both exist and react upon each other. The God without, in whatever guise, knocks at the door of our heart and awakens a response from the God within. Without that knock the inner God would have remained slumbering; without the inner God the knock would have been meaningless. The beauty around us beats upon our finer sensibilities and awakens them. Thus is mankind interlinked and the dream of one, expressed in terms of beauty, rouses the dreamer in another to appreciation and action.

The Lord resides equally in all hearts, it is true, but all hearts do not manifest Him equally. It is a question of unfoldment. Environment can either help or hinder us in this unfoldment, can draw forth either our baser or our better qualities. And as environment reacts upon the individual, so does the individual react upon his environment, thus influencing other individuals for weal or woe. None stands alone. Man affects man; nation affects nation; humanity works upon itself, just as a flower unfolds its petals.

Every facet of creation is capable of reflecting God, and beauty is that reflection. It is not a thing of calculation because its source is the Spirit, not the mind of man. It has nothing to do with the self-conscious. The merely moral may be barren of it, but it flows from the Holy. Beauty and holiness are inseparable. All the Christs of all the ages have been transcendent artists,—their lives are poems. We cannot think of them other than in terms of beauty. You and I may talk of beauty and may analyze it; they radiate it. The artist in matter is but the fraction of an artist. His mind is turbid and passion-tossed and thus reflects only

broken bits of the Divine; but the artist in life has become like a clear and placid lake, flashing forth the glory of the sun on every side.

The one Master has already painted the complete picture of the universe in flame and wind, in earth and wave, in emotion and thought, in matter and spirit. We are part of that picture, each one of us. Is our life drab or dull? Possibly it is done in that low key so that the high light next to us may shine and the supreme Artist be glorified. As we see the great picture clearly, we are able to discriminate; to place things in their right proportion in accordance with the plan. But when the vision becomes obscured for us we have a distorted view; we take too much of this, too little of that and accent wrongly. The ugliness of emotional and mental distortions is sometimes the beginning of morality. Where the opinion of others has little effect, where ordinary ethical considerations do not hold, Beauty steps in and challenges: Can you do this ugly thing? And what convention could not accomplish, Beauty achieves. This is true morality since we refrain because it is right and beautiful to refrain and not just that we ourselves may be kept clean.

If only we could each day see freshly as if for the first time! If we could but get rid of name and form and tradition; if just for one moment we could gain an unsullied impression of things as they are and not as men have said that they are,—could see them in themselves and not through the medium of men's minds,—the world for us would be reborn in glory. How may we gain this pristine vision? How may our senses, dulled by repeated impacts, recover their lost sensitiveness? There is One within Who makes all things new. When we find Him we find unchanging freshness, a beauty that is never dulled. Beauty of earth

has its opposite; but heavenly beauty is all-inclusive and transforms everything into its own likeness. The great artists touch this. They pass beyond mere prettiness. Beauty is not prettiness. It is death as well as life; it is majesty; it is grace; it is the tender and it is the terrible. That is why in India the Supreme is sometimes depicted with a necklace of skulls, blessing with one hand and slaying with the other.

In truth, beauty is *Maya*,—that veil of illusion by means of which the Divine plays hide and seek with His universe. Do we not find the Goddess of Beauty rising from the foam of the sea, the symbol of illusion? It is the lure which wrongly understood, entices us ever deeper into the ocean of incarnations and of death, and rightfully understood, liberates.

The Infinite is shining back at us from every point of space so that on all sides and always man may be confronted with ultimate perfection and not utterly forget. At night when we stand silent and aspiring under the blue-black arch of the sky, gazing at the steady brilliancy of the stars they signal to us,—"remember!" The banners of the sunset flung over the misty valley while the first jewels of the city shine forth are a pledge of eternal beauty to us. Man is a creator with the material ready to his hand,—whole worlds lie ready for his making; but his attempts will be bungling till he can say from the depths of his soul: "Not I, but God worketh in me!" He creates in his own image. As he is in his consciousness so will his product be,—ugliness from ego, beauty from the Divine.

All work can and should be an offering to God. In this way drudgery is transcended. But that offering is incomplete and man's joy is incomplete until he is free to pour into his gift the beauty content of his soul. The nation

however poor, which provides its people with the means for artistic creation, will be infinitely happier than that nation which enriches itself at the expense of the art sense of its members. Handicrafts are the only means by which the people at large can express this yearning for artistic expression. Think how they are starved to-day and what the result is in our civilization! Art is now a luxury. It should be united with necessity. Practically everything that the ancients touched in daily life had a message of beauty which stimulated the higher side of their nature. Their commonest utensils were graceful and lovely. Hand-made civilizations such as theirs, carry with them into the future the fragrance of the soul. The things we make with our hands are extensions of ourselves, but machine-made articles become an extension of the machine.

This is not the age of the artist because the people themselves are not artists—they have no chance to be. It is not an age when men unite to raise a church or temple with their own hands to the glory of God; but the beautiful has never left us. Man can still bring it into his world, if he will, can give it proper consideration, instead of leaving it standing outside till all the other guests have been provided for. Beauty is the Ambassador of God and should be our first and most-honored guest. Even the earth-bound materialist is moved by it, while the cleverest scientist cannot dissect it. It gives the feeling of completion; it fills the interstices of the soul. Who can think of love without beauty; of true religion without beauty? And these are the great incentives to physical and spiritual life.

Say what you will, call it what you will, it is beauty that leads all creation in its mad dance. The mating instinct is said to be the motive force in life, but even there beauty is the lure, drawing us on and on to union with the Divine. It

is the creation, preservation and final destruction of the universe. Creation is beauty seeking expression; preservation, beauty maintaining that expression through an endless round of desire; destruction, beauty the reflection leading to Beauty the Reality. As we behold it around us it is illusion's self, inviting the soul but never satisfying; the intangible, the retreating, the never-to-be-attained; the tearful beckoning of the earth in spring, the sudden flush of flowers, sunset and snow; the maddening glamour of the emotional world, the lofty beauty of the mental world! Illusion, all illusion! We pursue it because we must. But there comes a time when it is not enough to behold beauty, to seek to possess it,—we must become it. From the depths of our being arises the poignant cry for finality, we suddenly realize that we are looking not at the sky but at the pool and breathless with hope, slowly we turn our eyes upward and behold Reality.

THE SPIRIT OF MEEKNESS AND LONG-SUFFERING

By James Naylor

(Eminent Quaker Mystic. 17th Century.)

There is a spirit which I feel that delights to do no evil nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations. As it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in thoughts to any other. If it be betrayed, it bears it, for its ground and spring is the mercies and forgiveness of God. Its crown is meekness, its life is everlasting and unfeigned; it takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind.

In God alone it can rejoice, though none else regard it, or can own its life. It is conceived in sorrow and brought forth without any to pity it, nor doth it murmur at grief and oppression. It never rejoiceth but through sufferings: for with the world's joy it is murdered. . . . I found it alone. Being forsaken I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens and desolate places in the earth, who through death obtained this resurrection and eternal holy life. . . .

Press into the heavenly spirit with its power to overcome the earthly spirit with its powers. Strive earnestly in the meek spirit to obtain a measure of faith and patience larger than the temptation and that will endure to the end of it, a meekness and love to cover all strife and wrath, a long-suffering to famish all haste and that which seeks its own ease. . . . which is done by sinking down into the heavenly feeling, contrary to the will of the exalted life, whereby you will be overshadowed from above to overcome things below. . . .

Dear hearts, you make your own troubles by being unwilling and disobedient to that which would lead you safe. There is no way but to go hand in hand with Him in all things, running after Him without fear or considering, leaving the whole work only to Him. If He seem to smile, follow Him in fear and love, and if He seem to frown, follow Him and fall into His Will, and you shall see His in yours still,—for He will prove His own.

For what is more agreeable than wisdom itself, when thou thinkest of the security and the happiness of all things which depend on the faculty of understanding and knowledge.—*Marcus Aurelius.*

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

INTRODUCTION

Beginning in October, it will be my privilege to present in the pages of the "Message" for ten or twelve numbers an account of the life and work of Swami Paramananda. A sojourn of some length in India, a collection of letters rich in lofty thought, and close association with the Swami from the first hour of his landing in America, have provided me with rare material for my task. The suggestion for it came to me through urgent requests from India to send all the facts available about the Swami and his achievement in this country, for publication there. In gathering the data together, the suggestion came to me with irresistible insistence to transform the dry enumeration of incidents into a narrative for Occidental readers.

It seemed to me also that the time was ripe for such a narrative, since it is not a question of drawing from the shadow of obscurity an unknown life. For eighteen years the Swami has lived in the full glow of public work, carried on with a tireless zeal and exalted consecration that have won for him the loyal devotion of hundreds and thousands of striving hearts. His printed works have reached thousands more, and numerous are the letters from grateful souls who have been lifted out of pain or despair by the power of his written word. When we consider that on one short lecture tour of eleven days eighteen hundred of his books and pamphlets were sold, and that publishers count at least five readers to a book, we see that in that brief interval nine thousand hearts were touched. Add to these the hundreds who heard him during the twenty-two lectures given in those eleven days; multiply this number by constantly repeated lecture tours from coast to coast and one will have

some conception of the countless numbers who have come within the range of the Swami's spiritual influence.

Here and there in this extended field of loving labor have grown up more concentrated centres of activity. A faithful group at Geneva, Switzerland, a large and exceptionally ardent group in Cincinnati, a Centre for some years in Washington, a nucleus of devoted students in Louisville, a growing number of friends in Chicago and elsewhere, mark points of deeper contact which the Swami has made as he has journeyed about teaching. From 1907 to 1923 he gave the best of himself to Boston; and as the fruit of his zealous effort he has there to-day a firmly rooted work, which ranks among the established churches of the city. It was in the beginning a patient, silent battle against conservatism and prejudice. The real and enduring nature of the victory won is evidenced by the imposing home of its own which the Centre has occupied in the Fenway since 1914, and even more by the large numbers which gather in the Centre's Chapel at the Services and Classes when the Swami is in Boston.

Ananda-Ashrama, founded by the Swami over a year ago in the foothills of the Sierra Madre range in Southern California, stands as the culmination of eighteen years' rich achievement. That the crowning work should take the form of a Peace Retreat on the fragrant slopes of these Mother Mountains seems the natural flowering of his own life and heart; for his steadfast aim has been and is to create unity and harmony wherever he touches the world. Uplifted serenity characterizes his attitude of mind invariably. In all his warfare for Truth his sole weapons have been tolerance, non-resistance, gentleness and love. The Ashrama was established to embody these principles in vivid living form. It began literally as an extension of

The Vedanta Centre of Boston, for it took up the average of attendance and the keenness of public interest just at the point to which the Boston Centre had carried them after sixteen years of activity. The Ashrama, however, has gone forward so rapidly and attained such magnitude that it seems now rather to be an extension of itself. It possesses already, much more sharply defined than the parent work, the spirit of cosmopolitanism; and people, not merely from all parts of the country, but from all over the world meet on its hill-tops in loving unity and understanding.

It seems peculiarly fitting that I should break my long silence by telling of a life to which I owe my own life. During my serious illness, which began in March, 1922, when all hope was abandoned, the Swami established a vigil; and for three days and three nights of unbroken intercession the Shrine was kept open, a sacred light burned before the altar, and the Swami with the household watched by turns in prayer and fasting. The vigil was continued for nine more days throughout the waking hours. One of the first three days fell on Thursday; and when the Class met for its usual lesson, the Swami came from the Shrine, told why the household was in prayer and called on all present to join them. For one hour nearly two score of earnest hearts bowed and interceded for my life.

When the vigil was started I knew nothing of it, but during the first night I suddenly felt a heavy burden drop from me so completely that I expected to rise in the morning fully restored. I even rose from my bed and walked to a chair on the other side of the large room. The nurse entering the room at dawn found me sitting there and declared that if she had not seen it, she would not have believed it possible. The following morning nurses and doctors were amazed at the marvellous change in my condition

and appearance, and even the most skeptical frankly acknowledged that it must be the work of a higher Power. One of the doctors said to a fellow physician later that they could take no credit for my miraculous recovery, it was wholly due to the Swami and to the remarkable atmosphere and influence of the Centre.

When they told me of the vigil, I understood. After that I rested wholly on it. I recall one night when I refused the ministrations of the nurse, sent her to the adjoining room, and all through the pain-weighted hours of darkness I kept my closed eyes fixed on that vigil flame before the altar, with the Swami's prayer-wrapt figure seated near it. The power and blessing which came so lifted me that I seemed to float above the pain. Often afterwards I had to cease my prayer, because when I united myself with that centre of spiritual force in the Shrine below, the waves of power which swept through my weakened body were more than my depleted strength could bear.

The Swami did not leave me on the threshold of living, he led me gently back to life—through his prayers, through a brief daily reading of some sacred book, through holy words of encouragement and counsel, and above all through his poems. They came like shining rifts in a leaden sky; and as the sun's rays, piercing storm clouds, seem to draw up moisture from the earth, so these glowing rhythmic lines drew my vital energies from the depths back to the surface of my being. Whenever he wrote a new poem, he brought it to my bedside to read to me; and so vivid was the impression made by it that often I could repeat it word for word after one hearing. These frequent poems became the substance of my prayers and meditations. It is, however, a slow and arduous labor to bring a weakened body back to usefulness and vigor. Even when I began the present nar-

rative three weeks ago, I felt physically unequal to it; but thought-contact with an exalted, God-given life has infused me with new strength, and I go forward with full hope and trust in that higher Source which never fails.

The joy and privilege of my task have carried me far beyond the boundary lines fixed at the outset; but I am confident that every one who has come within the influence of the Swami's peace-bestowing personality or felt the benediction of his writings, will be grateful to know all that can be told of this life which has brought inspiration, blessing and joy to so many other lives.

(To be continued)

REPORT

On June 9th Swami Paramananda unexpectedly left California for Boston. Although the season was late and many people had already gone away for the summer, the attendance increased steadily during the three Sundays he was there. On June 19th he gave his fourteenth annual dinner. In spite of its being arranged hurriedly there were about eighty guests present. On his return trip west, the Swami spent two nights in Cincinnati. On July 5th he spoke under the auspices of the Psychology Club of Cincinnati and the following afternoon and evening he gave two public addresses at the Unity Auditorium before large and appreciative audiences. The Cincinnati group is a very ardent body of workers who seek to express their devotion and enthusiasm through action. The moment news reaches them of the Swami's approaching visit, announcement cards are printed as if by magic, hundreds of people are notified and lectures are arranged almost over night so that no matter how short the time given them, when the Swami arrives his audiences are awaiting him and he is free to give out his great message, unhampered by petty details. This time, for instance, people came from neighboring cities,—Louisville, Indianapolis, Dayton, etc.,—in order to be in Cincinnati during his visit. The Swami is now again at Ananda-Ashrama, where he hopes to remain for the rest of the summer.

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GIFT OCT 1 1924

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

OCTOBER 1924

POISE AND PERSONALITY

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"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

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POISE AND PERSONALITY

By Swami Paramananda

POISE makes the foundation for a greater personality. We never find one whom we revere, one who is worthy of our respect and admiration, who is fretful and lacking in balance; because these qualities do not go with true greatness of character. We know without any great exertion on our part that it is not the nervous, excitable, nor even the most active type of human being, who accomplishes the most; but rather the one whose forces are well-organized, whose speech is well-controlled and whose body and bodily faculties are under command. Such a man, whatever he undertakes, not only undertakes it with masterful attitude, he accomplishes it.

In order to find the utmost expression of life we must make our mind like a lake of still water. What does still water do? It reflects. Not only it reflects, but it reflects accurately. Whenever our mind is ruffled, no matter what the reason, it can no longer reflect the true image. One can always give a reason for agitation or a disturbed attitude. Whenever we are vexed, whenever we strike another by our thought, our physical force or our words, we have plenty of reasons to offer. We say: "This man offended me, robbed me, harmed me"; but in spite of all these ex-

cuses we find that we injure ourselves more than any one else can injure us.

In every department of life, from the smallest undertaking to the greatest, we need tranquillity and poise. And what is poise? It means balance, and we all must have balance. If we do not have balance, our vision is not correct; our forces, even our physical forces, are not well-organized; and naturally we meet with failure. The greatest failure that man can meet with is spiritual failure. If we do not have a grasp on our inner life, our physical life can endure very little. A strong man with physical vigor, with a good, even a brilliant mind, eventually breaks down if he does not have poise. Indian philosophical and spiritual study lays great emphasis upon the state of balance. It leads not merely to intellectual speculation, but to meditation. There are people in the active world who will say: "What have we to do with meditation? We cannot waste our time sitting and reflecting on something which is indefinite."

The question of what we call indefinite and what we call definite is relative. One person finds subtle things very indefinite; his vision is narrow and limited; he does not see the subtle principles of life. Another person, whose vision is unfolded, finds a definite connection with higher forces; not only he finds a definite connection with them, he benefits by them. They enter into his life, they unfold in his actions. Even his words carry a certain magnitude and measure of what he has found in his spiritual life. We are all double beings. There is not one who can say he is lacking physically. There is not one who can say he is lacking spiritually. The very fact of his existence proves he has the two parts.

Whenever we are in union with ourselves, then only can we surmount our difficulties. It is not by fighting, it is not

by physical force or mental calculation, that we surmount them; it is by clear vision, by a poised mind. Heat and cold, pleasure and pain, success and failure, victory and defeat: these are constantly revolving. To maintain our balance under all the varying conditions of life is one of the greatest points in philosophy. A man who lacks poise is forever fluctuating,—rising and falling, rising and falling. Think of the nervous energy that is expended by one who has no control over himself. Whenever he comes upon something pleasing, he is excited, over-wrought; he may be so elated that he wears himself out through elation. Then again, in spite of all his calculation, in spite of all his theories, something goes wrong and he feels equally the strain of sorrow. We can never expect to advance even in our physical life until we have a sense of poise. It is not only needful for the philosopher, the mystic and the poet, every man needs it.

We always think that our upset conditions, whether physical or mental, come from our outer surroundings. Outer surroundings are merely the apparent causes. For instance, one person is agitated by a harsh word; another person is not. It is the same word, perhaps exactly the same situation; but one takes it so lightly that the blow falls upon him equally lightly. It does not seem to touch him. The other takes it so rigidly, it falls upon him with such tremendous force, it almost breaks him. These are simple facts of life, but they are invariable.

It is not in the big moments of our life, when we see every one watching us and we pretend many beautiful things, that we prove our greatest worth. It is when we are taken unaware, when no one is watching or giving us credit for what we are doing; then our inherent nature, our innate love of nobility, the tendency in us to express the

highest, leads us onward and inspires us to do the right thing. This we cannot do if we live too much on the surface. Our modern life, in spite of all its glamour and apparent advancement, has brought us to a very superficial condition. We are always taking things from the surface, and what we need is to go deep down. Not only in philosophy and religion, but even in our every day life we must have a deeper sense.

Our vision can be made clearer; our mind can be made to grasp a great deal more than it is capable of grasping at the present time. It is not that some great power is barring our way, or that some great mystery is holding things from us. We bar our own road. So much of our force is scattered and because of this we feel the strain of life, we have not the power of resistance. But we can increase our resisting power; the power of resistance of our body can be increased, the power of resistance of the mind can be increased. A man can become like a rock; also he can become so fragile that at any little word he goes to pieces.

A man becomes strong because he has trained himself to be strong. Do not think for a moment that if we merely pray to be saved from trouble and succeed in keeping ourselves out of unpleasant situations, this will bring us the greatest amount of blessing. We need all the ordeals and all the experiences of life in order to become what we ought to be. It is not the one-sided life that makes us perfect. I do not mean that we should sit down and pray for troubles, although there are great souls who welcome them. Whenever any difficult situation arises in their life, instead of shrinking from it, they welcome it with a smile. Why? Because it is a test, and whenever we surmount a difficulty, we prove to ourselves that there is something better and

more profound within us than we are capable of grasping in our ordinary moments. We make a definite connection with our inner being. But this we cannot do if we live too much on the surface.

The real and the apparent are constantly passing before us. What we see on the surface is not absolutely unreal; it has its value; but there is something we do not see which has a greater value. To sum up the philosophy of life: there must be a definite relationship between the physical and the spiritual; the body and the soul must co-operate. As we grow more and more still, more and more in harmony with ourselves, more in tune, we find this point of contact. Sometimes when we forget ourselves altogether, we are restored and revived from fatigue and strain. Whenever we give ourselves a chance, we find that even in the midst of confusion we can have a glimpse of true vision. The more agitated we allow ourselves to become, the less opportunity there is for clear perception. Whenever we are worried over our own fate or over any one else's, that is not the moment for us to have clear vision. Remember this always!

Poise means literally, simply and logically that we are one with ourselves,—no friction, no agitation, no disturbing elements, no rage, no storm. Storm does not always come from outside. Often we find there is a greater storm raging within our own soul and we create it. Also we have the power to uncreate it. We do not obtain this point of equilibrium if we live carelessly. We may think that if we appear before others as ladies and gentlemen, that will suffice; that when we are living in our own homes, where no one is watching us, it does not make any difference whether we live in the right way or not. This is a great mistake. Whatever our ideal is, it must be expressed through and

through our life. Above all we must be in tune with ourselves. It is not public opinion that makes a man great, it is his own endorsement of himself. Therefore one must form the habit of entering within one's own sanctuary.

You may laugh at this. You may say: "This idea is from the Orient; the Swami is an Oriental. The vision of an Oriental is different from ours of the Occident." The fundamental principle of life is one. We are all striving for freedom; we are all striving for self-expression. The greatest self-expression does not come through one who is scattered, who is unbalanced. This does not mean necessarily one who has been in an insane asylum, but rather one who is not in equilibrium, not normal in the highest sense. Very few people are. But everybody can be normal. Whenever we say to ourselves: "Oh, I am not capable of doing this, I cannot hold my mind still, I have no control over my body, I cannot control my temper," this implies that we are not normal. If we are normal human beings we do not say such things either to ourselves or to others. A normal being is so in tune that his life becomes like music and even his words fall in rhythm.

There is no such thing as accident. What we generally call accident is really the result of long deliberation. It represents the sum total of our thoughts and feelings through days and months. This is true of high inspiration as well as of ignoble action; neither happens by chance. We must give our thoughts to that which is vital if we wish to make our life fruitful. The greatest men in this world, no matter in what line we find them, whether they be men of genius or spiritual prophets, are not produced suddenly. They are the product of profound deliberation; they are the fairest fruit of spiritual evolution. If any one thinks that by chance he may have happiness, by chance he may

become great, he is very much mistaken. Suppose he is lauded to the sky, suppose he is put suddenly on a very high pedestal, can he retain that place unless he has innate greatness unfolded within him? Suppose a man taken from a crude form of life is put in the place of the President, do you suppose he can handle the position, or that he will enjoy it?

We have infinite power within our own self. Theoretically we may all know this; we may read in books that every man is potentially divine, that every one is pure and perfect; but we must know it in our life. A man's life must coincide with all that he claims he is; if not, very soon his own action will betray him. What we need is to start from where we stand. Every man can start from where he is. Our failures are but lessons, our mistakes should bring us fresh determination.

In India there is a very splendid attitude taken by the philosophers and wise men. They teach us that we should never condemn any one. "Have we not all descended from that infinite Source?" they say. "Are we not all innately divine, children of immortal bliss; and as such can we not redeem ourselves?" The only way we can redeem ourselves is to connect ourselves with that Source. In order to do so, it is not sufficient merely to belong to a creed or profess a dogma or take up anything superficially. It means the unfolding of our life, and this we can only accomplish through our every-day living. It does not mean that we must abandon what we are doing with our hands and feet, that we must neglect our worldly duties; but rather that all we do, we must do with a different attitude. Our life of activity, our vision, our actions all must flow from within and lead to the infinite Source. Things become material when we look upon them with a material eye; the same things be-

come spiritual when we interpret them according to high ideals.

This world is neither good nor bad. Some people say it is full of evil, because evil is emanating from them. Mystics and sages find it full of power and inspiration because they have these qualities within themselves. There is a very ancient saying which comes down to us from the Upanishads, the great Indo-Aryan books of wisdom, that whatever exists in this universe is filled with the one divine Principle; know this and never be sad. What a tremendous, what a definite, what a consoling statement! Even should we be apparently confused and full of blankness, all is filled with one great divine Principle and we are part of That; or as a great Christian mystic in his ecstasy once exclaimed: "This whole world is full of God." A man in his materiality may say this is nonsense, the world is not full of God. He sees nothing but evil, his dealings with people are unpleasant. Sometimes we draw out evil from other people by the attitude we take towards them, by the words we utter. We inspire them towards evil and then again we have the privilege to inspire them towards the highest.

We must have faith—not a shallow faith, not something we pretend; but absolute faith in the divine nature of man, so that no matter what he may do to us we shall not give up our ideal. That is what we need and not mere theories. A man may pick up theories from Scriptures and books, but they do not stand the test of life. Let us have that which we can make part of our own being. All the great ideas and ideals that are born in the Scriptures are but the experiences of souls divinely inspired, and because of that they are helpful to us. Until we become in tune with these ideals, we find life full of lack, full of emptiness. There-

fore in the midst of all our activities, in our daily round, we must not forget to look up to That which is the highest, the truest, the deepest part of our nature. These hands and feet cannot work unless they are sustained by a Supreme Power. They can only be led to perform that action which we are capable of conceiving. According to his concept, man becomes either great or small. If he is imbued with the highest, the noblest, the loftiest inspiration, it will be impossible for him not to give expression to that in his outer life.

Within this house of clay there is another dwelling, a rampart which no hostile enemy can enter. In our moments of silence, in our moments of perfect tranquillity and balance, when we shut all materiality out from our soul, we find access to the sanctuary within the inmost recesses of our being. This divine sanctuary is the common property of the whole human race. There is none so sinful, so depraved that he can be eternally barred from it. No one can bar our path to it; no one can keep us away from it. It is our divine birthright. We always possess it, but we must become conscious of it; we must learn how to enter there. We must grow calm and so full of poise that even in the midst of storm and turmoil we shall know we have a refuge within, which nothing can molest.

When we gain poise, it is not only that we make our life invulnerable and safe from outer afflictions, but it gives us access to higher wisdom, as the great Chinese philosopher Chuang Tzu declares in his graphic description: "When water is still it is like a mirror. It gives the accuracy of the water level and the philosopher makes it his model. If water derives lucidity from stillness, how much more the faculties of the mind! The mind of the sage, being in repose, becomes the mirror of the universe, the speculum of all creation."

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

When the sun rises it sings the Sacred Name for the sake of all creatures. When it rises it destroys the fear of darkness. He who knows this is able to destroy the fear of darkness (ignorance).—*Chandogya Upanishad.*

He is happy whose circumstances suit his temper; but he is more excellent who can suit his temper to any circumstances.—*Hume.*

If thou workest at that which is before thee, following right reason seriously, vigorously, calmly, without allowing anything else to distract thee but keeping thy divine part pure as if thou shouldst be bound to give it back immediately; if thou holdest to this, expecting nothing, fearing nothing, but satisfied with thy present activity according to nature, and with heroic truth in every word and sound which thou utterest, thou wilt live happy. And there is no man who is able to prevent this.—*Marcus Aurelius.*

Give us, oh, give us, the man who sings at his work. Be his occupation what it may, he is equal to any of those who follow the same pursuit in silent sullenness. He does more in the same time, he will do it better, he will persevere longer.—*Thomas Carlyle.*

The happy man is he who is cheerful with moderate means; the unhappy, he who is discontented in the midst of plenty.—*Democritus.*

God would have us serve Him by loving Him above all, and our neighbor as ourselves. This is enough; it must be done in simple faith, without any subtle refinements for the present, as we must do all things in this world, where perfection is not to be found, waiting for the day when it may be done after a heavenly and eternal fashion. But eagerness and agitation are not good. Your wish to do

right is good, but let it be free from excitement. I would forbid any such excitement as the source of all imperfection.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

It is an admirable proof of infinite wisdom, that what is noble and benevolent beautifies the human countenance; what is base and hateful imprints upon it a revolting expression.—*Schiller.*

BALANCING ROD OF LIFE

By Swami Paramananda

Covet not pleasure;
Shrink not from pain;
Stand firm on the balancing rod of life.
He who seeks pleasure must surely take
pain;
For they are coupled—the inseparable twins.
Let thy soul live in tranquil harmony
amid pleasure and amid pain.

LIFE'S ETERNAL SONG

By Swami Paramananda

Sing when joy fills thy mind!
Sing when sadness crowds thy heart!
Sing when life's stream runs its
fullest mark.
Sing when death brings its darkest gloom.
Sing that song which will never change
with time or tide of life.
Light and shadow, joy and pain,
Fame, infamy, loss and gain,
These are all set hours for our life's
eternal song.

A MAN OF TRANQUIL WISDOM

From the Mahabharata

Moved by the knowledge of what is true in life, one should never grieve for either the past or the future. Be thou of such a frame of mind, O prince of Kosala, in respect of every affair that may engage thy attention! Desiring only to obtain that which is obtainable and not that which is unobtainable, do thou enjoy thy present possessions and never grieve for that which is absent.

Endure the prosperity of others although thou art thyself divested of prosperity. They that learn to adapt themselves readily to outer conditions succeed in enjoying the prosperity which comes to others. Prosperity leaves the person that hates others.

Sometimes man renounces wealth, and sometimes wealth renounces man. What man possessed of knowledge is there that would feel grieved at the loss of wealth? As no one can form an adequate idea of the past nor can foresee the future there being many intervals of time and place, a person like thee, who is possessed of such wisdom and such strength, never indulges in grief for loss or gain, for good or evil.

Do thou repair to the great forest and lead a life of happiness there, all alone and subsisting upon fruits and roots, restraining speech and mind, and filled with compassion for all creatures. He that cheerfully leads such a life in the forest, with large-tusked elephants for companions, with no human being by his side and contented with the produce of the wilderness, is said to act after the manner of the wise.

A large lake, when it becomes turbid, resumes its tranquillity of itself. Similarly a man of wisdom, when disturbed in such matters, becomes tranquil of himself.

EGOISM AND REALIZATION

Extract from Letters of Swami Turiyananda

At first one has to apprehend Truth through discrimination (*Vichara*); and afterwards, when the discrimination is firm and free from doubt, realization forthwith takes place. Whenever there is a cessation of doubt, misgiving and contrary notions with regard to Truth, the mind gets a steady hold on reality; and this is called the realization of Truth. Through the grace of the Lord one attains this in himself in due course.

One does not get rid of egoism simply by desisting from work. The way to do this lies through work. For the crude oil to get boiled it must be put on the fire. To refine sugar one has to remove a lot of scum by boiling it. Then it becomes pure. In like manner, to purify the mind one has to carry it through the path of work, until it gradually becomes unselfish and hence pure. It is useless merely to give up work mechanically. The idea that I will not work because it produces egoism comes of intense selfishness. It bespeaks a dreadfully *Tamasika* (inert) temperament. One must convert it into *Rajas* (activity) through work, and then by gradually attaining to *Sattva* (balance), one is really freed from egoism. "One who has egoism in his heart may not work, but is full of egoism withal;" while he who is free from egoism and well-balanced, is really free from the bondage of work, even though he does everything.

There is nothing that is not He. Everything is He, the Lord. It is only because we do not see Him that we see other things; otherwise all is He! Name and form proceed from Him and rest in Him. The wave, the foam and the bubble are nothing but water. Hence Sri Ramakrishna says: "It is He who has become all this. There is nothing besides Him." This is the truth. One who has realized

this truth will not be able to deny it. It is a state "beyond the senses and mind." But That which is beyond the theory of apparent evolution and everything, is the One, the *Advaita;* nothing else exists.

He alone is true. The *Jiva* (individual soul) and the universe that spring from Him are also true unless He is lost sight of. They become unreal when we lose sight of Him and look at the names and forms. Why? Because then they cannot exist. But if we remember Him, we can understand that the central stalk of a banana tree has sheaths around it and the sheaths again enclose the stalk. Such ideas as "In Me all this is strung as pearls on a thread" then stand explained.

The thing is, we must realize Him. When He is realized, nothing else exists. Everything then becomes saturated with His Presence. All troubles last only so long as we do not realize Him. All trouble is at an end when we know Him. Only He exists. He is the one absolute Truth and all doctrines centre round Him. Once you realize Him, it is peace everywhere. Realizing Him one may follow any system of doctrines to one's liking, it will not do any harm.

SURRENDER

By Marion Forster Gilmore

Oh! God, I would not be a rebel longer
Against Thy will as I have been thus far!
Take me and use me, heal me of my blindness;
And in these depths I may behold a star
Divinely mirrored; in this songless striving
My soul may learn to sing such melody
As it has never voiced; and, O my Father,
More truly serve because more trustfully!

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(FOREWORD. Reiterated requests for facts concerning Swami Paramananda's life and work, to be published in India, have reached us recently. In preparing the data desired, the impression has come to me strongly that there are as many in America as in India who would be eager to know these facts. I have woven them, therefore, into a narrative for western readers, which will appear in the next ten or twelve months of the "Message". The Introduction was published in the July number.)

I.

INCEPTION OF WORK IN AMERICA

Swami Paramananda landed in New York two days before Christmas, 1906. He seemed to come as the spirit of the Christmastide itself; and I recall writing to one of the Swamis in India at the time that it was as if a Christ-child had been born in the house. As he moved through the halls there was always a murmur of song on his lips, and an unvarying brightness in his mood and bearing which filled the house with joyousness. This quality of joyousness had evidently belonged to him from the outset; for soon after he joined the religious Order of Sri Ramakrishna, its President, Swami Brahmananda, gave him the name Basanta (Spring), the name by which he is still known among the older Swamis. Sometimes he called him Basanta Kokhile (Spring-bird) because of the keen pleasure he derived from his singing. When the President himself told me of the name, he added in explanation: "You know Sankara's saying: 'A saint is like the Spring; wherever he goes he carries the song of birds and the fragrance of flowers'." Swami Vivekananda coupled name and Sanskrit saying so closely that he rarely spoke the one without repeating the other.

The Swami's own face and heart were always shining and he could not bear to have the least cloud shadow any other face or heart. I remember one day of festival at the Vedanta Society when all through the early hours of the

celebration he was restless and weighted. In the afternoon he came to my door, his face glowing, and exclaimed: "I have found out what was the matter. Mr. G. was sitting in his room grieving over some bad news, but I have cheered him up and he is all right now." At another time one of the closer members of the Society had met with a serious accident. Her sister was alone with her and was wondering how she could reach the Swami, when the bell rang and he stood before her with the quiet words: "Do you need me? What has happened?" It has always been characteristic of him that he hears the silent call of the heart as clearly as the spoken call of the lips and never fails to respond.

The ship on which the Swami crossed from England was to dock on Sunday morning just at the hour of the regular Service at the Vedanta Society; so only three of us went from the Society to meet him. When the steamer came alongside the pier, he was nowhere to be seen. We were busy with the luggage when he took his place silently among us. This noiseless, unobtrusive manner of approach is peculiar to him. His footstep is always soundless and possesses a lightness and spring which give the impression of moving above the ground rather than on it. He was calm and perfectly at ease; and he maintained the same quietness and simplicity when an hour later he faced a large portion of the congregation, who had lingered at the Society after the Service in the hope of seeing the arriving travellers. There was no sign that he was a stranger in strange clothes, surrounded by a strange people. He spoke English with perfect fluency and gave no hint of constraint. Afterwards that picture of the tall, slender, serene figure rose before me when an older Swami told me that Swami Ramakrishnananda had introduced Swami Paramananda

to him with the words: "Here is a boy who is absolutely fearless." Too often we forget that our self-consciousness, embarrassment and sensitiveness to opinion are minor forms of fear, which impede our spiritual progress. Only one who is untouched by the world and in conscious touch with a protecting Source can be without fear. The Upanishads tell us that the knower of the Supreme is called the fearless one.

A sudden shift of circumstances soon after the Swami's arrival forced him to take a Sunday Service. He conducted it with the greatest ease and composure. His rare gift of language was apparent even then when for the first time in his life he faced a large gathering. After that he spoke frequently at meetings and the Saturday morning Class was put in his charge. It was in April just four months after his landing that he made his first contact with Boston through a visit to Mrs. Ole Bull. Mrs. Bull, meeting him for the first time, was strongly impressed with his deeply spiritual nature and many gifts, and in letters to friends in India she compared him to Sukadeva. Sukadeva was the son of a Brahmin in ancient India. Having received his early training from his father, he was sent to the court of a wise king to be taught of him. The king, to test him, gave instruction to his guards to let the boy's coming pass unnoticed; and Sukadeva sat for three days at the palace gate, scorched by the heat of noon, chilled by the cold air of night, without food or drink. Such treatment to a high-caste Brahmin was an ignominious affront, but the lad sat silent and unconcerned.

Then courtiers came with silken cloths, jewels and sweet perfumes. His body was bathed in scented water, laid on a soft couch to rest, and savory dishes were brought to break his long fast; but the boy remained equally unmoved. When

he was led to the audience chamber, the king gave him a goblet full to the brim to carry about the great hall. Sukadeva, with dancing girls, courtiers, and gay music all about him, went three times around the hall without spilling a drop. The king then said to him, "Go home, I have nothing to teach you." It was the same enduring calm, the same youthful wisdom and spiritual vision which Mrs. Bull saw in the Swami, and which led her to predict frankly that he had a great work to do in the West. Even then she urged him to establish a Centre in Boston.

His visit lasted three weeks; and not long after his return to New York he left again for a sojourn of some length at a Vedanta Retreat, established a short time before in the Connecticut hills as a branch of the New York Society. More than one of those who were living there at the time have told me what a vital quickening the life of the Retreat received at his coming. He set apart hours for morning and evening meditation and all the day he was teaching informally, sitting under a nearby tree with a sacred book in his hand or walking with a happy group up some hillside talking of holy things. The greatest lesson he taught was by a sixteen days' silence, during which no word passed his lips. The power gathered through constant higher communion and complete conservation of strength made an impression on the lives of those who watched him which will never be effaced.

There was nothing abnormal or strained in his mode of living. He wandered through the woods, sat for his evening meditation on a flat rock under an isolated tree, and gave himself up fully to the enjoyment of Nature. He also mingled with those about him, but did not speak. A passage from a letter written me at this time shows the childlike simplicity of his mental attitude. He writes: "I stay

out of doors and walk alone in the woods, lie down on the rocks and sometimes think, think deeply; all harmless and innocent thoughts cross my mind. Sometimes I think as if I am a baby lion, maybe motherless, still must not be afraid of other animals." Then follow the ringing words now in "The Path of Devotion:" "My own experience tells me that strength only is religion, strength is truth. Anything that makes us weak is sinful. With all our power we must avoid that."

"I sing," he writes again: "I sing very loudly because there is no mortal to listen. I sing to myself. I sing for the satisfaction of my inner self. Mostly I sing this song: 'O Mother everything is Thy will, Thou doest Thy work. People say, I am doing, I am doing. Whatever Thou wishest Thou canst do. Not I, not I.' This is the true wisdom. One becomes free after realizing this." Another letter reads: "I am after all only a little boy, but an innocent boy. What Mother wants me to do I do not understand, but I know I am Her child. I am sure She will guide me and protect me. That is all I want. Let the whole world stand against me, I do not care. I am a soldier, a faithful, true soldier, but it is a very hard battle; but no great work was ever performed without the supreme sacrifice."

September found Swami Paramananda in charge of the Vedanta Society in New York and for fifteen months he conducted practically all the Services and Classes. He brought a fresh spirit of devotion and fervor into the New York work, and those who gleaned help and blessing from it expressed their gratitude by frequent offerings of fruit or flowers. Most of the flowers came from a florist by the name of Brown, who had a shop round the corner from the Society. All the winter the offerings kept coming; and the florist grew to know the lithe, graceful figure of the Hindu

teacher and to look for the friendly word from him which he often spoke in passing. Upon the arrival of Easter Eve the Swami, returning from a walk, found a miniature forest of blooming plants and cut flowers before his door with Mr. Brown's own card, on which was written: "I have sent them so often for others, now I wish to send some for myself. Please accept my warm wishes for a happy Easter."

Every one felt the subtle power of the spiritual atmosphere which enveloped the Swami and which still surrounds him. His freshness and buoyancy, his tender concern for the happiness and welfare of those who sought his help, could not fail to make irresistible appeal to all hearts. The joy of his presence, one letter declares, could have "no other reaction but an accentuated joy", and another: "Your presence in the room, without a word, would be an inspiration and a help to live the spiritual life." A lady who had had the pleasure of entertaining the Swami in her beautiful home on the Hudson sent him these words of warm gratitude for his visit: "My home seems even more radiant since you have honored it with your presence. We are truly blessed in knowing you, and I feel that a man of God has been in our midst."

"I cannot feel that I should remain silent and not try to express that gratitude which I have felt in my heart towards you since hearing you speak", another lady writes after meeting and hearing the Swami at the house of a friend. "What you said seemed to illuminate for me what had been a great darkness, and because of that I cannot adequately express my gratitude. It was a great pleasure to my husband also to have met you and we earnestly hope that another meeting may not be far distant. I think we both feel that the message of Truth which you carry is an unmeasured blessing and benefit."

The Swami had and has now an undaunted way of facing difficulties, which carries people through their troubles with a courage amazing to themselves. He does it by changing their attitude of mind rather than the outer condition. He makes the heart superior to its struggles. "I owe my very life and reason to your teaching", writes one who had been lifted out of great trial and distress, "for things have happened since then that I could not have gone through without the knowledge taught in your lectures. Everything is so changed and I owe it all to you. I have learned to be the same in pleasure and pain, and to realize that I am nothing of myself, but that Divine Mother can help us to do the impossible thing. I depend on Her for everything and She never fails me. I am more than grateful to you, dear Swami, and bless the day that brought you to me, as I was perfectly indifferent to spiritual things and very well satisfied with life as it was. Now what a difference, for I can think of very little else than spiritual things, and it brings such wonderful joy and peace that I wish I might give it to all the world."

I could multiply such passages indefinitely, for letters of recognition and deepest thankfulness came constantly and continue to come; but the two which follow will suffice, since they seem to voice the spirit of them all: "Much sunshine and joy have come to me as I have watched you live the teaching; and as I have watched and listened, I have felt strengthen in me the aspiration to attain and to live the only life worth living—life in the Spirit. So you see how much I have to thank you for, which I do most heartily." "If I can only reflect upon others a little of the light that shines upon me from you, then and then only can I hope to repay your love and devotion to us all."

(Chap. II, "Salient Characteristics," and Chap. III, "First Book," will appear in November.)

REPORT

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

August and September have seen the hills of Ananda-Ashrama turn burnt orange under the sun of summer. They have seen the countryside parching for water even while at the Ashrama a tunnel was being pierced deeper and deeper into the heart of the mountains, seeking ever for the underground source of water that feeds the springs of the Sierra Madre range. They have seen the water come in a glad stream, flowing into the almost emptied reservoirs in time to save many rare plants and trees. How much water is yet uncertain as the tunnelling is not completed, but a sufficient amount to ensure blessed moisture even in times of severe drought. More than this have August and September witnessed. With the passing of their days the addition to the main building, which is to be the living quarters for the consecrated workers, has come into being with extraordinary rapidity and will be ready for occupancy by the middle of October.

On September first Swami Paramananda went east once more, answering the call of devoted hearts in Cincinnati and Boston. St. Louis, a new field for the Swami, was his first stopping place. A wire received from there tells of two lectures and three classes in thirty-six hours. Warm interest was manifested and eager hope expressed that the Swami would always include St. Louis in his itinerary. The report from Cincinnati and from Dayton has not yet reached the Ashrama, but it will be contained in the November issue of the "Message of the East." It was not easy for the Swami to leave California at this time when so many important developments at the Ashrama are nearing completion. Likewise the ordinarily dull season of the late summer has shown scarcely any falling off in attendance at

Services and Classes. Even on very warm Sundays, the whirr of motors sound on the road to the Ashrama, from the purr of the Packard to the chug, chug of the little Fords. In themselves the motors tell the story, for to Ananda-Ashrama come rich and poor, the intellectual and the simple-hearted, drawn upward to the still retreat in the hills by a common spiritual hunger. And always those who come exclaim on reaching the tree-encircled plateau where the house stands and where the Services are held: How fresh and cool it is here after the heat of the valley, and what peace there is—more than the peace of the hills.

Not long ago two came who had been connected with the purchase of the property over a year ago. They had known the place well as it used to be. When they saw the new building nearly completed, with its grey walls of unchiselled stone, simple and enduring, like some Old World monastery; when they saw the chapel garden which was but lately redeemed from the wilderness; when they saw the rose garden planted only last April and already yielding roses of hot-house perfection which are gathered daily for Services in the little Shrine; when they saw all this and much more, they were amazed and delighted.

Aside from the Sunday congregation and casual visitors, the Ashrama has had guests for a longer period. Swami Prabhavananda, assistant to Swami Prakashananda, head of the San Francisco Vedanta Society, came to the Ashrama for a ten days' rest. Swami Paramananda gave him warm welcome and took him for many walks over the property and drives into the surrounding country. Swami Prabhavananda has only lately come from India, but he said that at the Ashrama he felt at home again. A member of the Cincinnati group came at this same time and in a few days made himself a vital part of the Ashrama community.

The Swami is expected back early in October for the dedication of the new building. During his absence services and classes are being conducted as usual by one of his assistants.

THE VEDANTA CENTRE OF BOSTON

The Vedanta Centre of Boston has carried on its work for the past year with fine spirit in spite of many handicaps. Its working force has been greatly diminished by the call of most of its resident members to the Ashrama. Thus the responsibility for the work there rests upon a very few brave hearts and faithful shoulders. But spirit is mighty and its light has shone unfailingly.

The two Services on Sunday have continued uninterruptedly but the Tuesday night Class was suspended, being replaced by the Tuesday Supper Club which met for many months till summer heat made it seem best to discontinue it. This was not a purely social gathering as the name might imply. In Jerusalem Jesus with His disciples over nineteen centuries ago sanctified the breaking of bread, and in all ages the consecrated have transformed the simple meal into a spiritual feast. The Tuesday nights at the Vedanta Centre were carried on in this spirit, the supper which all helped to prepare, being only incidental to music, poetry and uplifted thought along all lines. Many have written of the stimulation they have received from this vital personal contact with the work. There is a great blessing gained in the time of faithful waiting and those who have held together with loyalty and devotion during the Swami's many absences in California have surely gained this blessing.

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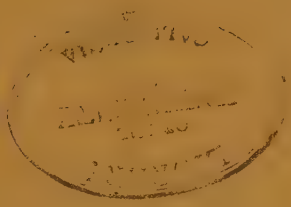

NOVEMBER 1924

INTROSPECTION AND SPIRITUAL VISION

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Published monthly except in August and September

VOL. XIII NOVEMBER, 1924 No. 9

INTROSPECTION AND SPIRITUAL VISION

Lecture by Swami Paramananda

WHAT has "Introspection and Spiritual Vision" to do with our normal, physical life? It has to do with it from every angle. It is the physical life of man, when properly tuned, that exalts him and lifts him to a higher vision; and it is through spiritual vision that we find a working hypothesis for our life. The great Roman philosopher Epictetus tells us: "You are a distinct portion of the essence of God and contain a certain part of Him in yourself. Why then are you so ignorant of your noble birth? You carry a god about with you, wretch, and know nothing of it. Do you suppose I mean some god without you, of gold or silver? It is within yourself you carry Him and profane Him without being sensible of it, by impure thoughts and unclean actions . . . and when God Himself is within you, are you not ashamed to think and act thus, insensible of your own nature and hateful to God? If God had committed some orphan to your charge, would you have been thus careless of him? He hath delivered yourself to your care and says: 'I had no one fitter to be trusted than you; preserve this person for Me such as he is by nature,—modest, faithful, sublime, fearless, dispassionate, tranquil'." What a beautiful picture this draws,

but how alien it is to our own consciousness. How seldom do we think of ourselves in this light!

Man must prove things for himself, he can never live on hearsay. This is true throughout life, not merely in spiritual things. If some one comes and tells you that you are a millionaire, your first impulse is to find out if it is true. You will go a long distance to discover whether there is even a possibility of your having become rich; yet when you are told by great seers of your spiritual heritage, you turn a deaf ear. In the same way, if some one tells you, you are invincible, that you carry within an immortal soul, you say: "No, I see men dying, suffering from disease, frail and faltering. How can I be invincible?" This conflict is being waged constantly from some angle, but we cannot meet it with mere theory. Only the man of vision, the man who has found something real, he alone can withstand the onslaught of life. Too often we make a caricature of life, of the Ideal, and of what we call religion. It is not the fault of the Ideal that we do this. We should never try to challenge any ideal on the ground that it has failed. It is we who have failed to raise ourselves to the level of the Ideal.

If a man works with his hands and feet, his mind and brain, without any objective, without any goal before him, he may kill himself; because life is not organized in that way. It is not those who overwork, not the most strenuous and energetic who accomplish the greatest amount. It is the man with far-seeing wisdom. You may say that only very rarely do we find one who has this far-seeing nature, who is endowed with divine attributes. How can you or I expect to possess such vision; how can we hope for such wisdom to guide us in our material and in our spiritual life? That is where we blunder. These eyes of ours are capable of seeing both good and evil. There are people who have

become incapable of seeing evil. You may think: "They are fools. It requires no great shrewdness to see that people are evil, that the world is full of evil. I should not trust any one. I should be full of suspicion." Another, instead of suspicion, instead of chaos and disorder, finds power and divine order. He establishes something unshakable. Which is the greater?

Do we gain anything when we see life from a lower angle? It is very easy for us to be doubting and suspicious; it is very easy for us to see only things which are on the surface; but as long as we dwell on the surface we cannot find any peace for ourselves and certainly we cannot give peace to any one else. When we see from the surface, our mind, our brain, our heart, all our faculties, are constantly distorted. Until we have found an underlying principle which is not only elevating to us, but which inspires us and is sufficing both for our material and physical life, we have no foundation either for our spiritual life or for our material life. Do not think for a moment that when a great mystic, philosopher or poet bursts forth with lofty vision that he has come upon it suddenly, and that you too may suddenly come upon it. It comes through order, through the law of perception. It comes as the result of living and the result of thought. The man who is constantly indulging himself in hatred, jealousy, anger and all the lower propensities, will never be inspired. He has no material to be inspired with. One who is always looking down to the lower conditions of life is not going to see the beauty of the sky. He has turned his eyes away from the sky.

Higher vision means that we have to cultivate finer instincts. We possess these finer instincts. Even a little child possesses them. We do not have to wait until we are grown up to unfold them. Little children, when they first

hurt an insect, feel pain; they feel that they have done something wrong; their conscience troubles them. But what happens? They repeat the experience; they begin to ignore their subtler instincts; they deaden their finer feelings. Sometimes older people encourage them. As a result, to-day in all this glamour of civilization, in spite of all our advancement, we lack one thing and that is the finer instinct. Parents are bringing their children up with the thought of weapons, with the idea of killing if necessary in order to exhibit superiority. It is the brute instinct. We should leave these things behind. If we teach them to hate some one whom we regard as an enemy, some one who is alien to us, we are planting the seed of discord in their hearts; and the very instinct of hatred we are awakening in them will turn itself against us. It is the law.

We cannot sow in the soil of life something ignoble and expect to reap something beautiful. That is the reason why the life of religion is fruitless unless there is the living quality behind it. Religion is not something that can be put on the shelf. Live it! The man who makes a show of life is not the one who reaps the fruit of life; it is the man who lives inwardly, whose finer instincts have blossomed forth. No one is without these finer instincts. We all have love in our hearts, we all have kindly impulses. Some of us encourage these, and they unfold and come to fruition. It is like the opening of a flower. If we have cared for a flower, if we have watched over it, one day we find that it has come to blossoming and the whole place is filled with fragrance. We do not think it suffices merely to put it in the soil. We do not neglect it; we nurture it and in time it comes to full blossoming.

So is it with life. Many times we conceive great ideals, lofty thoughts, noble impulses; they thrill us, they give us

the feeling that we have found something lasting; but that is not the end, that is only the beginning. These feelings require nurturing. When we have planted these noble instincts in our heart we must care for them. It does not matter wherefrom they come; the whole universe is filled with them. Do not think for a moment that any one Bible, cult or religion has the monopoly over them. They are in the cosmic universe. We all have these finer, living forces within us, but we are not all willing to be aided by them.

If our thoughts are pure, free, vibrant, full of productive qualities, if our mind is active, if mind and heart are in tune with our higher instincts, we cannot help but be productive. Do you suppose that if a man has great vision, great aspiration, that he can remain idle, that he can sit in a corner and do nothing? He must give expression to his ideals. When we possess lofty vision, we have to express it. By vision I do not mean something abnormal and morbid. I mean clear sight. These eyes of ours can be so clarified that they cease to see things confused and mixed; they see clearly, directly. It is possible for us to have unerring vision. Some people have such keen insight that they seldom make a mistake; they foresee what is going to happen. One does not have to be a prophet to foresee. Even a limited amount of intellectual power gives one that far-seeing nature; but when we touch the spiritual province through introspection how much more vision do we have, how much greater possibility to bring about our own betterment and to give something better to humanity! Therefore we should cultivate a certain intuitive feeling,—that which we call introspection.

The average person as a rule looks without. Whenever he has any trouble he always looks outside for the cause. "Someone has spoken harshly to me, someone has hurt me,

someone has robbed me", he says. Always he finds his excuse in the outside world. But the wise man does not try to find his excuse outside; he makes his adjustment from within. If there is any disorder he knows that he has the counteracting influence within himself, that by controlling his inner nature he controls the whole universe. This is one of the vital points in life. If we are able to find that inner passage which leads into the inmost recess of our being, then even though we are in the midst of chaos, even though we are tired and worn by the hard conditions of life, if we can retire to that hidden sanctuary, be it only for a few minutes, we are refreshed and restored. The business man needs this. Life is not designed in such a way that man should give all his time to business. What is he going to gain from his business if he has not found something more enduring, some constructive basis for his life?

Life does not become productive through accident; it does not become unproductive through accident. We have definite lessons we must learn, and these lessons are constantly being given us. Our thoughts and feelings we are constantly planting on the field of life and out of these springs our destiny. Our life is continually producing either good or evil. For this reason wise men seek first of all to know their objective. Is not that one of the greatest teachings of the Bible? "First seek ye the Kingdom of Truth and all other things shall be added unto you." What are we trying to do in the material world by our great advancement, as we call it? We are trying to reverse the order. The worldly wise say: "Never mind the Kingdom of Truth, do everything else first; then if you have any time left, you may take a little for religion." What is the result? We obtain nothing. We are defeated at both ends, because we cannot suddenly reverse the order of life and find its fulfillment.

The Kingdom of Truth does not mean something alien to our present life. Our present life is part of that Kingdom of Truth; our present body, mind, intellect and spiritual nature are all parts of that great Kingdom. Therefore when we have gained clearer vision, we condemn neither the material nor the spiritual world. We find a basis of unity, of harmony,—a balancing rod. That is what we all need and in order to find it we must give ourselves the proper opportunities.

Every man requires a certain amount of recreation. If we overlook it, we break our instrument; our bodily life is impaired if we do nothing but work. We must care for our bodily life and that means work, play, worship. These three principles must go together, and yet we violate this law continually. We do not feel the need of spiritual expression. After we have done our daily duties, we think we have done well; but in order that we may do these duties efficiently, we need spiritual instinct, we need higher vision, clearer insight. When these are manifested through us, then we may legitimately expect to express great things through our life. If we have something exalted within us, then also we can give to others something exalted.

Whenever we stand on a lower plane we see all the little differences; we see the difference between one man and another, between one face and another, and every little defect; but when we stand on a higher level, these differences vanish and we see all things as one. From the mountain top, as we look down into the valley, we see all the green things in one great blending harmony. Similarly with life: When we are dwelling in the small world of petty differences, we find nothing but conflict, we have no sense of rest or harmony, no chance for love or forgiveness. When, however, we raise our life to the higher level of the spiritual, then we see the

great fulfillment of ideals, and the light of the Spirit becomes a reality. We no longer feel separated from any one or anything, for we see our life as part of the great cosmic Principle. This is wholesome vision. It does not make us abnormal. These eyes of ours have infinite capacity for seeing. We can increase their power of seeing good and constructive things; they can be spiritualized; and when they are spiritualized, shall we not have greater possibilities for expression and achievement?

Suppose it does not appeal to you, this idea of working for humanity, for the great universe. Never mind the universe. You want happiness, you want better conditions in your own life; and in order to bring those better conditions you must be a better person. More and more you want peace; but you have to earn peace and this means that you must have peaceful thoughts. In order to have happiness you must have the qualities that produce happiness. Thus every man and every woman is responsible for the world condition. If we see evil, then there is something wrong with our own eyes. There are people who do not see evil even where we see it. Life becomes transformed when by spiritual sight we bring ourselves face to face with higher realities. In India we have a parable that even a piece of base metal, when it is brought in contact with the philosopher's stone, is transformed, is turned into gold. A sword, once it has touched that stone, may retain its shape, but it can no longer harm. Similarly our base, ignoble and selfish nature, when brought in contact with the Divine through introspection and higher vision, is purified and transformed, and this transformation is the aim of all philosophy and religion. Nothing less can bring us the realization of our highest Ideal.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUE SELF

From the Aitareya-Upanishad

Who is He whom we meditate on as the Self? Which is the Self?

That by which we see form; that by which we hear sound; that by which we perceive smells; that by which we utter speech; that by which we distinguish sweet and not sweet; and that which comes from the heart and the mind, namely, perception, command, understanding, knowledge, wisdom, seeing, holding, thinking, considering, readiness or suffering, remembering, conceiving, willing, breathing, loving, desiring?

No, all these are various names of knowledge of the true Self. And that Self, consisting of knowledge is Brahman. All the Devas; these five great elements, earth, air, ether, water, fire, these and those which are, as it were, small and mixed; and seeds of this kind and that kind, born from eggs, born from the womb, born from heat, born from germs; horses, cows, men, elephants, and whatsoever breathes, whether walking or flying, and what is immoveable—all that is produced by knowledge of the (inner) Self.

It rests on knowledge of the Self. The world is produced by knowledge of the Self. Knowledge is its cause.

Knowledge is Brahman.

He (Vamadeva), having by this conscious Self stepped forth from this world, and having obtained all desires in that heavenly world, became immortal, yea, he became immortal. Thus it is. Om.

The ultimate end of all knowledge and wisdom is man's inner purification and the performance of good and noble deeds.—*Talmud.*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

God is not external to any one, but is present with all things, though they are ignorant that He is so.—*Plotinus.*

The man cannot see God, but the Divine in man sees God. —*"The Perfect Way."*

With these eyes of thine thou canst not see Me; therefore I give thee Divine sight.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

God sends upon you at certain times breathings of His grace; be prepared for them.—*Saying of Mohammed.*

Every man has an open gate to God in his soul, he is in that temple where he can worship God in spirit and truth. —*William Law.*

Is it possible to seek paradise outside of God, or God outside the soul? Happiness, peace, paradise and God are within thee. To live with Nature and be with God are one and the same thing.—*Skovoroda, 17th century.*

How can one hide from that which never sinks to rest?— *Herakleitos, early 5th century B. C.*

Love must bloom and the spirit of man must follow the will of God written in his heart.—*Bunderlin, German mystic, 16th century.*

When a man, having freed his mind from sloth, distraction and vacillation, becomes as it were delivered of his mind, that is the highest point.—*Maitrayana-Brahmana-Upanishad.*

One hour's meditation is preferable to seventy years of exterior worship.—*The Dabistan.*

LIGHT

By Swami Paramananda

O Light! Thou art my Life!
My strength, my inspiration and action,
my vigor and joy
All are contained in Thee.
Shine forth! Shine forth!
Shed Thy beneficence.
Let Thy healing radiance warm
my ebbing life.
Enter Thou my inmost being;
Leave nothing in dark.
Fill my heart, my soul, and all my soul's
hiddenmost parts,
Unknown to my mortal mind.
Come Thou! I invoke Thee
with my soul's yearning voice.

THE REVOLVING WHEEL

Teachings of Chuang Tzu

Great knowledge embraces the whole; small knowledge, a part only. Great speech is universal; small speech is particular: For whether when the mind is locked in sleep or whether when in waking hours the body is released, we are subject to daily mental perturbations,—indecision, want of penetration, concealment, fretting fear, and trembling terror. Now like a javelin the mind flies forth, the arbiter of right and wrong. Now like a solemn covenanter it remains firm, the guardian of rights secured.

Joy and anger, sorrow and happiness, caution and remorse, come upon us by turns, with ever-changing mood. They come like music from hollowness, like mushrooms from damp. Daily and nightly they alternate within us, but we

cannot tell whence they spring. Can we then hope in a moment to lay our finger upon their very cause?

But for these emotions I should not be. But for me, they would have no scope. So far we can go; but we do not know what it is that brings them into play. 'Twould seem to be a soul; but the clue to its existence is wanting. That such a Power operates is credible enough, though we cannot see its form. It has functions without form.

Take the human body with all its manifold divisions. Which part of it does a man love best? Does he not cherish all equally, or has he a preference? Do not all equally serve him? And do these servitors then govern themselves, or are they subdivided into rulers and subjects? Surely there is some soul which sways them all. For coming into existence with this mortal coil of mine, with the exhaustion of this mortal coil its mandate will also be exhausted.

You hear not with the ears, but with the mind; not with the mind, but with your soul. But let hearing stop with the ears. Let the working of the mind stop with itself. Then the soul will be a detached existence, passively responsive to externals. In such a detached existence only *Tao* (the Divine) can abide.

It is easy to stop walking; the trouble is to walk without touching the ground. As an agent of man, it is easy to deceive; but not as an agent of God. You have heard of winged creatures flying. You have never heard of flying without wings. You have heard of men being wise with wisdom. You have never heard of men wise without wisdom.

A man does not seek to see himself in running water, but in still water. For only what is itself still can instil stillness into others.

By nourishment of physical courage, the sense of fear

may be so eliminated that a man will, singlehanded, brave a whole army. And if such a result can be achieved in search of fame, how much more by one who extends his sway over heaven and earth and influences all things; and who, lodging within the confines of a body with its channels of sight and sound, brings his knowledge to know that all things are one, and that his soul endures forever!

Life and death, existence and non-existence, success and non-success, poverty and wealth, virtue and vice, good and evil report, hunger and thirst, warmth and cold,—these all revolve upon the changing wheel of destiny. Day and night they follow one upon the other, and no man can say where each one begins. Therefore they cannot be allowed to disturb the harmony of the organism, nor enter into the soul's domain. Swim however with the tide, so as not to offend others. Do this day by day without break, and live in peace with mankind. Thus you will be ready for all contingencies, and may be said to have your talents perfect.

VEIL OF THE HEART

By the Sufi Poet Hafiz. 14th Century

The heart is the veil behind which is hidden His love; the eye is the mirror-holder which reflecteth His countenance.

The kingdom of love and the wealth of enjoyment—all that I possess is bestowed by the hand of His destination.

If we have offered for a ransom ourselves and our hearts, why need we fear? The goal towards which we strive is the purpose of His salvation.

Never cease to make His image the object of thine eye, for its cell is the peculiar chamber of His privacy.

Every new rose which adorneth the meadow is a mark of the color and perfume of His benevolence.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(Introduction, July number. Chap. I. "Inception of American Work." October number.)

II

SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS

The Swami did everything with a lightness of touch and a gladness of heart which gave constant inspiration to those about him. There was never anything solemn or forced in his methods. He made work seem like play and also interwove many happy hours of relaxation. Here is a chance picture of his daily routine given in one of his letters. He was living in the country at the time with a small group of earnest members and going to New York when anything at the Society needed his special attention. "Now I will try to give some news of our life here", he writes. "We rise early, take regular exercise by rowing; then we have bathing in the lake,—morning bath out of doors just like the Hindus; then meditation till nine o'clock. Then we have our breakfast between nine and ten, sometimes even after; then we have our reading from Raja Yoga which I finished to-day. We have read it all through, Raja, Bhakti, and the lecture on Immortality. We all enjoyed it immensely. Perhaps to-morrow we will begin 'Colombo to Almora'. Time is spent in this way. We have our dinner between five and six-thirty, a real vegetarian dinner. We all enjoy it very much. We only have two meals and do not feel the least need of another; so you see how Divine Mother has drifted us into this kind of regular life, almost like the Hindu mode of living. We retire early, often before ten."

This is another picture given when he was at the Society house: "The day was a pretty busy one for me. In the morning I decided on the next lecture list and the notice of Sri Ramakrishna's anniversary, and I took my usual walk

about the reservoir. After my lunch, which I take nowadays at one o'clock, I rested for a little while; then my engagements began from two p. m. and kept me busy until a few minutes after four. We made a new member to-day. Again I shall have to see a lady at eight p. m."

Nearly always there was a gathering of closer members after the midweek classes, and occasionally some one would go to a neighboring confectioner and bring ice cream. It was on one of these evenings that the Swami composed his first English poem:

Ice is nice
And cream is a dream.
Ice cream
Is a nice dream
Of human life.

These lines, spoken in laughing jest, may offer nothing to foretell the exalted and deeply mystical poems of his recent volumes, yet even here we find a philosophic hint,—that pleasures of the senses are the mere dreams of bodily life.

Although a gentle gayety was the habitual clothing of his mood, there ran beneath always a strong undercurrent of prayerful thought. This is especially apparent in the letters written during this period. At the top of a page we find some simple statement of fact such as this: "The weather has been like spring since yesterday. This morning it rained very hard but cleared off towards the afternoon and I took my walk around the reservoir. It is nice and warm and I was able to walk, taking off the hat." And at the bottom of the same page we read:

"Sincerity and self-sacrifice enable one to receive His blessings. Although the Lord is merciful to all beings equally, yet it is impossible to grasp His loving blessings unless we are pure and sincere. All glory must go to Him. Offer all the honor and respect and love you receive from

people at His Divine Feet and you shall never create any bondage for yourself. That is the secret. Never forget this and you will never make any mistake."

Or such words as these: "My whole life is a struggle to serve Him with pure and unselfish love. I shall do the same so long as life remains in the body. I can only do and die. To the fruits I have no right. As long as I live I will try to live the life; never mind what others say. I am a Sannyasin bold, a baby lion. Infinite strength is behind me, who can touch me? I am pure. I am a child of Mother Divine; there is my life, there lies all my strength. Must live boldly, work boldly and die boldly. Fear is weakness, fear is sin. I have nothing to do with that. I must struggle as long as I live; no matter if I fail thousands of times, still must get up with fresh vigor and courage. Life is a struggle, one must be bold enough to stand everything."

"Pray for me that I may be able to serve Him in the right way and in the right spirit. Oh, how I wish to serve Him and His children. But it is not possible to do unless we are thoroughly unselfish. But never mind, life is a constant struggle, and even if we fail hundreds of times, still must get up with fresh vigor to struggle. This is the way we should be. No weakness, no weeping, but strength and courage." And in an exaltation of self-sacrifice, he writes: "We shall have to die some day or other, those who are crucified are indeed very lucky, they meet a really honorable death. Oh, there is a great happiness in it. You know very well this is my path."

Service was for the Swami a watchword which sounded like a continuous bugle call in his heart. It is still a burning passion with him. This is the appeal in a letter: "Pray to the Lord that I may do a little service to His children, remaining always a true instrument in His hands; other-

wise this life has no value. I have only right to live a true and pure life, and serve as much as I can all His children. Sometimes the task appears very hard, as if I would never find any way out of it. But nothing can remain permanent in this world; the clouds vanish and again life becomes hopeful. Still we must try to stand like a rock under all circumstances. Let everything come and go, but try to remain undisturbed."

And again these lines written to me in India:

"Blessed are those who sacrifice their lives to serve the Lord and His children. There is no greater work than what you are doing now and it is such a blessed privilege to be near a God-man like Swami Ramakrishnananda. I am so glad you are serving him. You know Paramananda's one thought is to be unselfish. I may fail many times, but still I shall try to get up with fresh vigor, remembering those words of courage which still ring in my ears—'A thousand times failure let not frighten thee, child.' "

When he was able to render the smallest assistance, he was child-like in the simplicity and spontaneity of his joy. "We had a very good gathering this morning," he writes, "and the lecture was on 'God-Vision.' After the lecture and announcements I made a little appeal to the audience for the famine-stricken souls in India. It had a very good effect as we got seventy-five rupees at once. Wasn't that splendid? Oh, it made me so happy. Whenever I can do any service to Him by serving His children that makes me happy. I am glad to tell you that I sent this morning to our President two hundred rupees for the Famine Relief."

One Sunday afternoon some strolling negro singers came and sang beneath the window. Their voices were unusually melodious and we dropped a coin to encourage them. They sang for some time and the Swami was about to throw

down an additional five cent piece, when he suddenly closed the window and exclaimed: "No, that will buy a meal for two hungry mouths in India. Let us start an Indian Fund with it." We took a candy box, cut a slit in the top, printed on it, "For the hungry of India", and placed it at the door of a small private chapel he had arranged. Before long there were more than fifty dollars in the box; and it was touching to see the Swami's delight when he tied the dimes, quarters, halves, bills and one shining gold piece in a handkerchief and gave it to me to carry to India a few weeks later. Converted into rupees and annas, it made a generous sum and fed many famished mouths.

III

FIRST BOOK

The Swami's first book came out in December, 1907, a little less than a year after his landing. It was not meant to be a book at all. I was spending the summer months in the Catskills, busy preparing for press Miss Waldo's notes of Swami Vivekananda's teachings given at Thousand Island Park and published later as "Inspired Talks". It was a moment of grave crisis with me and the Swami sought to sustain me in every way possible. His frequent words, stirring and vital because they came from one who lived them, carried me over the difficult places and made the darkest hours bright with the satisfaction of conquest. Such appeals as these made defeat or faltering impossible:

"Do not be discouraged or disheartened; do everything fearlessly; never mind for the future." "Die like a hero-mother, fighting for the Truth." "Be bold, be fearless. Never mind if thousands of Paramanandas die before you, still stand firm and never give up. Oh, what a great thing it is to have love and devotion for the Lord. It is the only thing that can make one happy." "Do what is right, do

what is strengthening, do what is purifying, do what is uplifting and die quietly."

"You must always remain steady now and try to be cheerful. Remember this, we must not take up the true path for anybody's sake or give it up for any one's sake, but must do it for the sake of itself, and must stick to it as long as we live. Pray to the Lord to give us strength and light so that we may always serve Him in following the right path. Never mind if we die in the path, but never, never we shall give it up through weakness. *Jai Guru!* (Victory to the Master)"

And again: "May the sincere prayers of this child bring blessings to you and protect you from all evils. Nothing is permanent in this transitory world. So we must bear patiently everything, knowing that it is only for a few days. Happiness is transitory, so also misery. If I do not accomplish anything at all, let me die on the battlefield. Oh, there is a little happiness in that. Pray for this child that he may remain always true to his word. That is religion and that is my mission."

I fell in the way of copying the instructive portion of each letter in a little note book. One day at the noon hour of meditation it flashed across my thought that such life-giving words should not be for one only; and with the suggestion there sprang into my mind ready-made the preface as it appeared later. When I returned to New York in September, I told the Swami of my note book and of my plan for it. His child-like pleasure was delightful to see. There was no vanity in it, no thought that he was to have something in print; only deep joy that what he had done so lovingly for one might prove a help and blessing to many. This is, I believe, the strength of the book, that the words were written for a single striving heart. It is the tra-

ditional Aryan way of giving teaching, hallowed by a long line of holy sages. The Upanishads are only a sacred record of what Yajnavalkya taught the king, or what Satyakama Gabala told an eager disciple beside the sacrificial fire. I have always thought that the reason St. Luke is the most living of the three narrative Gospels is because it was written solely that Theophilus "might know the certainty of those things in which he had been instructed".

Work began soon after on the little book, as it was always called. There was nothing to do to the text. That was left untouched except that it was classified and arranged in chapters; but the prayers, salutations and litany at the end had to be selected and translated from the Sanskrit by the Swami. The manuscript was ready for the printer in November, and came out just a month later under the title "The Path of Devotion." It met with immediate success and since then has gone through many editions. A large number of the best critics in the country gave it favorable reviews; and like the Swami's later works it was compared to Thomas a Kempis, Brother Lawrence and other devotional classics.

I carried a large case of the books with me when I went to India three weeks later, and it found the same appreciation there as in America. The Dewan or Prime Minister of Mysore was so impressed with the purity and beauty of its English and the rare quality of its spirit that he wanted to make it one of the text books in the Mysore schools. He requested me to write the Swami and ask him to have a cheap school edition printed; but unfortunately the delay in doing this caused the plan to fall through. A school in Northern India, however, did adopt it as a text book. The morning I arrived in Madras, as we drove along the ocean front, I asked Swami Ramakrishnananda what he thought of the little book. He replied: "It is grand. It sounds like

Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda). It has the same ring and spirit. I am proud of the boy."

The Indian Review of Madras wrote of it: "The words are so alive that they seem rather spoken than written. No one can read the book without gaining a new impetus for the spiritual life and fresh courage to meet the difficult conditions of life in the world." "The Hindu", leading daily of Madras, gave it a whole column and many other Indian publications printed admirable notices of it.

Swami watched all this as a quiet witness. His attitude is best shown in the following fragment of a letter written at the time: "It is through Mother's blessing that your effort on the little book was possible. I never take any credit about it. The most curious thing about it is that I never feel that I am the author of that book. I read it with the same loving feeling and respect as I do the beloved Master's works. To me it is the same breath that breathes through this, too. As far as my abilities are concerned, it is the same feeling I still hold and in same position I stand to say sincerely, I have no power or anything of my own, but everything in me came direct from Him. As the days pass I find this feeling firmly rooted in me. How can I help seeing it? All the lectures, the talk and praise that come before me make me convinced every day of that wonderful Power. It is wonderful, indeed; irresistible. Those who have eyes to see it will be fearless and blissful." "Divine Mother will protect me. Without Her Grace nobody can do any good work. Let us not forget that, then we shall always be on the safe side. Man is in danger when he forgets his Divine Mother and runs after worldly things."

Surrender and humility were then, as they are to-day, accented notes in the Swami's nature. They mark the rhythm of all his thought and action. The whole course of

his life is shaped by a spiritual force far down within his soul. Until the urge rises from that inner depth, he waits and may appear to lack in decision; but when the impulsion comes, he moves swiftly, unswervingly, with a decisiveness and certainty which seem bred of second sight. I have known him to cross an ocean or a continent impelled by a sudden intuition, which justified itself later in some event at the time entirely unsuspected. Such surrender implies by natural sequence great lowliness of heart. It leads one to write such words as these: "Thousands like me may die in this moment, but that won't do any harm to this vast world. Truth is deathless and that will shine forever. Be bold and face the truth. If you have got an Ideal give your life for the realization of it. We must sacrifice our lives for our Ideal. It is no weakness, it is no hypocrisy, but sincere love and strength that will make us worship the Lord."

(Chap. IV. "Early Days in India" will appear in December number.)

This mayest thou do the better and the more readily, if thou be diligent and careful to set thy heart upon one thing; and that is nought else but a spiritual desire after God: how to please Him, love Him, know Him and see Him, and to enjoy Him by grace here in a little feeling and in the bliss of Heaven in a full being. This desire, if thou keep it, will tell thee what is sin, and what is not; and what thing is good, and what better; and if thou wilt but fasten thy thoughts to the same desire, it shall teach thee all that thou needest, and it shall procure thee all that thou wantest. . . . Set the point of thy thoughts more upon God, whom thou desirest, than upon the sin which thou abhorrest; and if thou do so, then God fighteth for thee, and will destroy sin in thee.—*Walter Hilton, English mystic, 15th century.*

REPORT

With the opening of the Fall season Swami Paramananda is once again at Ananda-Ashrama after a six weeks' visit in the east. Boston claimed him for most of this period, but on his way out as well as on his return he stopped at Cincinnati, St. Louis and other cities. His program was exceedingly full, especially in St. Louis where he spoke five times in twenty-four hours.

Just outside the city of Cincinnati is the Clovernook Institute for the Blind which has recently put into Braille the Swami's "Way of Peace and Blessedness" and has placed it in libraries for the blind all over the country. Nothing in his many years of public work has pleased the Swami more than this living contact with those "whose outer eyes are closed", so when a visit to Clovernook was suggested he eagerly acquiesced. Unfortunately the head of the Institute was out when the Swami arrived, but in spite of this he was given warm welcome and was shown over the buildings which contain an added interest owing to the fact that they were once the home of the Carey sisters, Alice and Phoebe, of poetic fame. The Swami was especially impressed by the printing establishment where the plates are made and the printing done for the Braille publications. The next book of his to be put into Braille will be the book of poems, "Soul's Secret Door". The Swami's teaching contains a peculiar stimulus for both the blind and the deaf. In Boston a member who is connected with work for the deaf has given to those whose "ears are deaf to the noises of the world", many copies of the "Creative Power of Silence", believing that it contains for them not merely comfort but a vitally constructive message. This applies equally to the blind and to all who are handicapped physically. Recently a gentleman at Ananda-Ashrama, a

doctor, whose specialty is crippled children, exclaimed with delight over the stress which the Swami laid upon the necessity for silence not only in spiritual life but in any life that seeks to be productive. Thus when through material limitation we are forced to curtail our outer restlessness and to turn our attention inward, it is not always a curse. Rather is it an opportunity and can become a blessing. Having to face the stern realities of life makes people peculiarly receptive to the profoundly simple and fundamental message which the Swami brings. A most cordial invitation has been extended him to address the blind girls at Clovernook on his next trip east which will probably be some time in January.

The Swami regretted that he could not remain longer at the Boston Centre, but his departure was hastened by the completion of the new building at Ananda-Ashrama. This building, to be known as Ashrama Cloister, is an extension of the present house and will provide living quarters for the consecrated workers. Those who have seen it have commented on the beauty and simplicity of its lines and arrangement. During the winter months the outdoor Services will be held in its spacious patio which provides a shelter from the wind while giving an unparalleled view of the rainbow-tinted mountains which form an impregnable background for the Ashrama. Giant bamboo, banana trees and other tropical and semi-tropical plants will soon add their charm to the architectural effect. Recently two members of the work brought as an offering to the Ashrama many sprouts of the giant bamboo. These are already sending up shoots and with the winter rains should show appreciable growth. Friends are thus represented in the Ashrama gardens in lovely flowers and shrubs, as well as in hours of devoted service given in cultivating Chapel Garden, rose beds and terraces.

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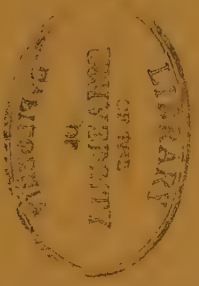

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CHRISTMAS GREETING

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

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CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

By Swami Paramananda

OUR heart is glad when the spiritual sun sheds its beneficent light upon our life. In the absence of that light we are sad and the whole world is merged in gloom of sadness. He who penetrates this gloom by his light and rescues the souls of men is our Redeemer. Perhaps for this reason even the birth of a Saviour is portrayed by light. Often the glow of a distant star points the way to the Divine Infant and always the celestial light surrounds the Holy Child. Light is the symbol of His coming; light is the symbol of His being. But if our light is hid under the bushel of materialism, of selfish thoughts and vain concern, then we are neither aware of His coming, nor conscious of His being.

Something very definite is required on our part in order that we may recognize the light and derive benefit through it. The universal sun gives its light and heat to all creatures, but those who deliberately keep their doors and windows shut, what benefit can sun give them? If through our arrogance, self-seeking and narrow bias we keep the doors and windows of our soul shut, then the coming of a Saviour benefits us nothing.

The real import of Christmas is not centred in its outer

festivities. The true happiness of the occasion does not spring from excessive gaiety, but from an inner sense of our spiritual worthiness. It is said in the great Bibles of the world, give and it shall be given to you. Give light and light will fill your life abundantly. Give joy and joy will be given to you abundantly. Give peace and peace will fill your life wholly and abundantly. Give your very life and it shall be given to you abundantly and eternally.

Is this not the basis of all true philosophy, ethics, idealism and religion? Christ will never dawn in a selfish and narrow heart, for there is no room left for His manifestation. Let us first cleanse our hearts of malice, envy, hatred and selfishness, else there will be no room for the Lord in our house. If God is love, then we must receive Him in love; not only the love that we bear towards Him, but our love must include all His beloved children. Nothing short of this can prepare us for our Christmas Feast. Let every Christmas candle be a symbolic reminder to our soul of our innate allegiance to God and our kinship to man. Let the glow of the sacred light dispel from our hearts all unholy feelings and fill us with joy of God and peace born of holy love.

PRAYER

O Thou eternal, all-compassionate Spirit, come unto us.
Give us refuge in Thy sacred Presence and may we never be torn away from Thee.
Thou art the Resting-place of all weary souls.
From Thee comes all life and strength and gladness.
Bestow upon us spiritual insight that we may know our union with Thee and always follow the path of light.
Rouse us from our slumber of ignorance.
Purify our sight that there may dawn in our hearts that vision which melts all coldness, wipes out all blemish, cuts asunder all doubt, removes all darkness.

Thou art the light of the universe, light Thou in us the lamp of true devotion and help us to keep it burning with steady flame.

Make us constant and unflinching.

May our faith and love for Thee be undying.

We ask Thy blessing and Thy protection from all weak and selfish thoughts.

Grant unto us serene and peaceful hearts.

Fill us and surround us with Thy holy peace.

NIGHT AND DAWN

Hymn from the Rig-Veda

The light, best of lights, has come. The brilliant shining forerunner has been born. As Night is impelled according to the impulse of *Savitar* (the Sun), so has she abandoned her seat for the Dawn.

With her bright offspring the bright one gleaming has come, and the dark one has abandoned her dwelling. Of the same race, immortal, following one another, both heavens (Dawn and Night) move blotting out each other's color.

Common is the path of the two sisters, unending. One after another they traverse it, instructed by the Gods. They quarrel not, they stay not, firmly established, Night and Dawn, of one mind, of different hues.

The shining bringer of youthful vigours has appeared. The brilliant one has opened our doors. Rousing the world she has discovered for us wealth. The Dawn has awakened all living things.

The generous one, that he who lies down may go—one to his enjoyment, one to his desire, another to wealth; that those who behold little may see widely, the Dawn has awakened all living things.

That one may win rule, another fame, another his desire, another achieve his end, to behold their different livelihoods, the Dawn has awakened all living things.

She, the daughter of the sky, has appeared shining afar, the young maid in white robes. Ruling over all earthly treasure, O Dawn, here to-day, auspicious one, shine afar.

She follows the course of the Dawns that have passed away, she the first of the endless Dawns to come. Shining afar, rousing up the living, the Dawn awakens none that is dead.

As thou, O Dawn, has put Fire in the kindling wood, as thou hast shone forth with the light of *Surya* (sun), as thou hast awakened men to offer sacrifice, so hast thou procured among the Gods fair wealth.

How long has this been? While she abides between those that have shone and those that shine now, she longs desirous for the former ones, looking forward with joy she goes with the others.

Those mortals are gone, who beheld the former Dawn shining afar. Now has she come to our sight. They are coming who shall behold in future times.

Removing foes, protector of Law, born from Law, kindly one, stirring youthful vigours, auspicious one, bearing food for the Gods, here to-day, O Dawn, most excellent one, shine afar.

Endlessly from of old the Dawn, the Goddess, has shone afar. To-day has gleamed afar the generous one. So will she shine upon days to come. Ageless and immortal she goes on in her own wont.

With unguents at the threshold of the day she has beamed forth. The Goddess has thrown aside the robe of darkness. Awakening the world, with ruddy horses the Dawn comes with well-yoked chariot.

Bringing prosperity and riches, showing herself she raises her brilliant banner, last of the endless Dawns that have passed away, first of the shining ones to come, the Dawn has beamed forth.

Rise up. Living life has come to us. The dark has passed away. The light comes. She has abandoned the path for the sun to go. We have come where men prolong their life.

With the rein of speech the singer of the car raises hymns, praising the far-beaming Dawns. Shine then to-day on the singer, O generous one. Beaming down upon us grant us life.

Mother of Gods, the banner of sacrifice, O great one, beam forth. Bestowing renown on the prayer, shine afar upon us. Make us to be fruitful among the people, bestower of all blessing.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

The *Avatara* or Saviour is the messenger of God. He is like the viceroy of a mighty monarch. As when there is some disturbance in a far-off province, the king sends his viceroy to quell it, so whenever there is a decline of religion in any part of the world, God sends his *Avatara* there. It is one and the same *Avatara* that, having plunged into the ocean of life, rises up in one place and is known as Krishna, and diving down again rises in another place and is known as Christ.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.—*St. Paul.*

Not a thorn pricks without His will; not a thread is broken without His direction.—*The Dabistan.*

In His eternity, outside of time, outside of every other limit, as pleased Him, the eternal Love unfolded Himself in new loves.—*Dante, Il Paradiso.*

Have confidence in the Truth although you may not be able to comprehend it, although you may suppose its sweetness to be bitter, although you may shrink from it at first. Trust in the Truth. Have faith in the Truth and live it.—*Buddha.*

If ye call upon God, ye will be able to subdue your imperfections, and the evil inclinations of your mind will depart from you; but they will return to you again when ye cease to call upon Him.—*Dadu.*

He who, conscious of his own light, is content to be obscure, he shall be the whole world's model. Being the whole world's model, his virtue will never fail. He reverts to the Absolute.—*Laotze.*

All our natural tendencies and desires appear to be nothing but applied religion. The heart seems to be, as it were, the religious organ. Religion arises with the heart, withdrawn from all real (material) objects, feels and makes itself an ideal object. All individual desires, united into one desire, whose wondrous object is a higher Being, a Deity; and hence genuine piety embraces all feelings and tendencies.—*Novalis.*

Better one life-master than a thousand reading-masters. If I sought a master in the Scriptures, I should seek him in Paris and in the high schools of high learning. But if I wished to ask questions about the perfect life, that he could not tell me. Where then must I go? Nowhere at all save to an utterly simple nature; he could answer my question.—*Eckhart.*

WAKE, AWAKE!

By Swami Paramananda

Wake, Awake!
A new light hath come into this house
that was once so dark.
Rise, my spirit!
Arise, my mind, my body and all ye
sense-slumberers!
Behold the glory of light,
dispelling all darkness!
Let all doors and windows of this house
be opened to the sanctity of sun.
Leave nothing unopened, nothing hidden
from the beneficent light.
Gloomy thoughts shall never enter this
house again;
Doubt and despair will vanish.
Yea, they will all vanish from this house
before the light.

GIVE ALL

By Swami Paramananda

Lover, give thine all,—
All thou hast and all thou art.
Give—give till thy hands and heart
are free.
Dost thou fear?
Nay, perfect love knoweth not fear,
nor aught but joy in giving.
When thou hast naught,
thou hast all;
When thou art naught,
thou art all.
Give thy life and give thy love:
Give all—give all!
When thy hands and heart are free
Thou shalt receive Him who is all,
yea, all in all.

GOD EVERYWHERE

By Swami Ramakrishnananda

A man who realizes God will have to be realizing Him throughout eternity. No power can make him forget Him.

Every portion of the universe is bristling with omniscience. To an ordinary man this appears to be a dead, soulless universe; but that man who has the inner eye opened can see that this whole universe is palpitating with life, because it is God's body.

In India Nature is to us our mother, our father, our friend and companion. We have been able to commune with this Nature as our own mother and so we boldly give out that the whole universe is living. Those poor western thinkers think that when a nation is in a baby condition, it has a tendency to personify everything; just as a baby sees a leaf flying in the wind, and takes it to be living, saying: "No, no, leaf, you must not move like that, keep still"; and that is the reason why in the Vedic period they saw mountains, rivers, etc., as living entities. But this is a great blunder on their part. A baby is very pure and for that reason it has some insight into the workings of nature. A *Paramahamsa* (Great Soul) has also been compared to a baby. But while a baby through its ignorance sees everything as living, the *Paramahamsa* sees everything as living through his wisdom.

Having thus found out that everywhere is God, the wise men have given this good news to people who have not the power to see God for themselves. But ordinary people cannot grasp this idea easily. It is too difficult for them, this idea of the Supreme Lord existing everywhere. So God has been broken up piecemeal, as it were; but not really broken up. As a man looking at you from the outside, does not confound your eyes with your ears, or your ears with your

nose; so this one God is broken up into many forms of Deity, through which the ignorant man may reach the one God; and each one may choose that one which is best suited to him.

FAITH AND LOVE

Pere Caussade. 17th Century

All creatures are living in the hand of God. Our senses perceive only the action of the creature, but faith sees the divine action in all. The action of creatures is as a veil which covers the deep mysteries of the divine weaving. If we could penetrate this veil, God would be revealed to us unceasingly and we should recognize Him in any event that befalls us. *Dominus est.* It is the Lord! would be our constant cry, and we should feel each circumstance of our life an especial gift from Him. Faith alone reaches the Truth without seeing it, and touches it without feeling it. It sees this world, as if it saw it, not beholding other things than those which are visible.

Hasten then! hasten happy and courageous souls! Hasten and follow this beloved spouse who passes onward with a giant step. Nothing escapes Him. Nothing is hidden from His eyes. He passes over the smallest blade of grass as above the cedars. The grains of sand are under His feet no less than the mountains. Wherever you step He has passed and you have only to follow Him wherever you may go.

What a lovely peace the soul enjoys when she has learned thus to see God through all His creatures, and through all events, as through a transparent veil. Then darkness becomes luminous, and bitter things turn to sweetness. Thus the human instrument, which would of itself be a hindrance,

becomes in the hand of the Divine Workman a help and a support.

If we only knew the infinite treasures which are continually presented to us, we should find all that our heart could desire. Love alone can measure them. The more the heart loves, the more it will desire and it will find nothing created can fill it, nothing less than God can satisfy it. The divine will is an abyss of which the present moment is the entrance. Plunge fearlessly into this gulf and you will find it even more boundless than your desires. Leave alone creatures, cleave not to them. Do not worship phantoms. They can neither give nor take away. The love of God alone can be your fullness, and will never leave a blank or a void. Adore it, go straight towards it, turning aside from all shadows. Pluck your idols from your heart. It will weep perhaps like a disconsolate child, but faith will triumph—faith which smiles at these apparent losses, as a governor of an impregnable fortress smiles at the futile attacks of the enemy.

BENEFIT OF PRAYER

From Letter of St. Theresa

You ought to enter on your prayer in a spirit of submission and resignation, resolving to let yourself be guided unresistingly along the path God wishes you to follow, confiding absolutely in His divine Majesty. Listen attentively to His teaching, whether He withdraws, closing the door, and leaving you outside, or whether He shows His Face to you, taking you by the hand. . . . Not to be willing to submit the understanding in prayer would evince a wish to instruct instead of being instructed. . . .

Man ought to stay at his post in prayer even though the evil ones wear him out by images or importunate sug-

gestions or anxieties . . . for they seize hold of the fancy, turning it hither and thither in such a way that it carries the heart along with it. To bear patiently with all these distractions, these importunities, is always to derive great benefit from prayer. This is what I call offering one's self as a holocaust, that is to say, letting the victim be entirely consumed in the fire of temptation, so that nothing of itself remains. It must not be imagined that to remain at prayer without any consolation is waste of time. On the contrary, it is to gain greatly, for it is to labour without any thought of self-interest, purely for God's glory. . . . There is a close connection between this prayer and that of our Lord in the Garden of Olives. . . . He did not ask to be delivered from sufferings, but from the repugnance of His human nature to those sufferings. What He prayed for was, that in the interior part of the soul, the power of the Spirit should be so communicated to the flesh as to make it as ready as the Spirit to suffer all. He received no other answer to His prayer than that He must drain the chalice, that is, overcome the weakness of the flesh by enduring it as God's will.

God who is the Giver of every good gift, using every instrument according to what He hath fitted it for, a beast as a beast, a man as a man, a saint as a saint, a prophet as a prophet, holds the hand of the scribe, so that he would else draw but misshapen characters, and guides, assists and acts in and by him, yet He let the action bear its denomination from its next and immediate agent, which is not God Himself but men. It is but the spiritual man's testimony for God though specially assisted by Him in it.—*Samuel Fisher, (Quaker, 17th century).*

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(Introduction, July number. Chaps. I, II and III in October and November.)

IV

EARLY DAYS IN INDIA

The village community is the pivotal centre of both the social and the governmental structure of India. Every family of importance is identified with a village, where it lives from generation to generation and has its land-holdings. Town residence is a comparatively modern innovation. The Swami's home village was in East Bengal. The family spent some time in Calcutta when he was a boy, and later they had a house in Dacca; but their real home was in the fertile country of East Bengal; and wherever they were, their rice and other provisions were brought from there by servants.

The father of Suresh, to use the name given the Swami at birth, was a tall stately patriarchal figure, with long waving white hair and beard, peculiarly fitted to stand at the head of a large and influential family, distinguished for its breadth of vision and its progressive spirit. He introduced many reforms in his village, among them a girls' school, one of the first to be established in East Bengal. The blossoming of the seed planted then has come recently in the work of his granddaughters, the Swami's nieces. One, a young wife of sixteen, passed ninth among twenty thousand students who came up for matriculation at the University of Calcutta. She was the first woman to attain that rank since the founding of the University and her name is known to every student in Bengal. She was given a scholarship and is pursuing her studies, maintaining the same high average. Another granddaughter is making an equally brilliant record, while a third has been for some years principal of a large girls' school in Dacca. The father

continued full of active concern for the welfare of his community for many years; but as he advanced in age, he withdrew more and more from public and social life and devoted himself to sacred study, prayer and meditation, with such growing fervor that at the end he became almost a religious recluse. He was known for his generous charities. He spent freely for those in need and his home was an unfailing refuge for the distressed and afflicted.

The mother of Suresh passed away when he was nine years old. The family observed special mourning for one month. This did not mean merely wearing a particular dress and withdrawing from social amusements. It meant practice of the most rigid austerity. In India when a mother dies, the children, if they observe the age-honored tradition of mourning, exchange their bed for a straw pallet; instead of their customary meals, they eat only plain boiled rice and vegetables, unsalted and unseasoned; the sons shave their heads; and all spend long hours in prayer and meditation. Suresh followed these observances with ardor, not out of childish imitation, but from genuine depth of feeling. When his older brothers had their heads shaved, he asked to have his shaved also. When straw was spread on the floor for them, he begged a pallet for himself; and he refused to taste any other food than that prepared for his elders, although some of the ladies of the household tried vainly to coax him to eat the special dishes they had cooked for him.

He was one of the youngest in a very large family,—ten brothers and sisters, a number of aunts and uncles, cousins, nephews and nieces (some older than himself),—a whole community in one enclosure. This enclosure, however, was an extensive one. A moat or wide ditch surrounded it and one entered the property by a bridge. Near the entrance

was a spacious *mandapam* or pavilion where at the time of weddings and other secular or religious feasts hundreds of people would gather. The office also was here. All the other buildings stood round a very large court. One was devoted to the dining-room, store-room and kitchen; another was the family Chapel or Shrine, where the daily worship was carried on; and the rest were living quarters. In the stretches of surrounding land were rice fields, a mango grove, a lichi orchard, a date and a cocoanut palm grove, a vegetable garden and other fruit trees. There were also three large tanks or reservoirs. One was kept exclusively for drinking and the villagers came there to fill their jars, because the water was known to be particularly clean and pure. A watchman—a tall, powerful man—used to make the round of the property with his lantern at intervals during the night and call out in a loud deep voice that all was well. Suresh was especially fond of this man, and when he was put to bed, he would beg to be wakened from his sleep to hear him shout.

Because of his mirthful, loving nature, the child was exceptionally dear to every member of the household, servants and family. But above all was he tenderly cherished by his father, who made him his constant companion. When he paid his visits to friends, the little boy was nearly always by his side, and the father could not conceal the glow of pride he felt when the child at the age of five would entertain large gatherings by his singing. Yielding to his persistent coaxing, he even took him on one of his long boat journeys, which he made frequently to look after his property. All the boatmen became the boy's devoted friends, and one of them not only begged the privilege of exclusive care of him, but he spent his entire wage on toys and sweetmeats for the child.

Suresh was also a pet with the missionaries who came into that section of the country to preach. The largeness of feeling shared by all of the family led them to open their doors to these Christian teachers when many other doors were closed to them. The most cordial relations existed between them. Often they would tie their house boat to the landing on the river bank in front of Suresh's house and spend days there in friendly association with the family. The ladies of the household would prepare lavish refreshments and this especially interested the little Suresh. His older sisters were remarkably beautiful. Because of their unusual beauty one was called Labonya or the Beautiful One, and another Hem-nalini or the Golden Lotus. The missionaries made much of them and brought them little tracts, which the young girls read with courteous interest; and there were frequent interchanges of song. The English visitors would join in the Bengalee hymns to Divine Mother and in return the Bengalee girls and boys, Suresh among them, would sing the Christian hymns; but no conversion ever took place.

Innumerable are the stories told by the family of Suresh's adventuresome spirit. In the garden of their village home was a swimming pool over two hundred feet long; around it grew tall mango trees; and one morning some gentlemen of the household were discussing the possibility of jumping from the trees into the tank, when Suresh overheard them. The suggestion was sufficient. Although he was not six at the time, he clambered up to a lower branch of one of the trees and dropped; there was a splash and he was in the water. It was the work of a moment only for some one to jump in and bring him out, but great was the consternation and excitement for that moment.

Rest at the hot noon hour is traditional in India; but for

Suresh it was a great hardship, when he wished to be running in the fields outside. One day he pretended to be asleep until he was sure that all his elders were deep in their usual siesta; then he crept away, joined his playmates and they all began to fly kites. One of the boys, watching his kite rise, discovered a bunch of ripe dates. The tree, however, was very high and no one dared climb it. Suresh volunteered to go up. He reached the top safely, picked the fruit and threw it down; but in his delight at getting it he failed to look where he was going; he stepped on a withered stem and fell headlong into a wet ditch. It was apparent that his arm was badly injured, but he insisted that he was unhurt. He got up, washed his clothes, dried them in the sun, put them on and was about to begin his play again, when his mother and aunts came running in great anxiety, having heard of the accident. The doctor found the arm broken and Suresh let it be set without uttering a cry. When a few weeks later it had to be re-broken and re-set, he bore it with the same mute heroism.

Although very slender, he was exceptionally tall for his age; and his height, added to remarkable agility and fleetness, made him a valuable factor in every game. He was only twelve when he was asked to substitute on a football team made up of grown men. He played so well that he was made a permanent member of the team and took part in many matches, some against professionals. At fifteen he was elected captain of a Boys' Athletic Club and he became an acknowledged leader in sports. But with all his buoyant enthusiasm, one thing was characteristic of him then as now,—he would never allow himself to become involved in any quarrel or dispute. He was always the peacemaker; and once when he could not curb an angry boy, he threw himself between him and his opponent, a man in

years, and took the blow the boy dealt, a blow so heavy that it made him faint.

A rare and subtle beauty of person with great gentleness and simplicity of manner wove a charm about him which attracted everyone, especially older people. Some of his closest associates were men twice his age or more. Yet with all his power to attract, there was an imperceptible inner shyness which made him shrink from undue attention. It gives him still, on meeting strangers, a grave dignity and serene reserve which render it difficult for any one to suspect the gay, playful nature beneath.

As the months passed, games and sports ceased to fill the whole day. Suresh sang holy songs to his father at the evening hour and read much aloud to him from sacred books, for his father's sight was dimming. One of the books the older man liked most to hear was a collection of the Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna. Suresh too read it with ardent interest; and one of the Sayings which began: "The butter that is churned in the early morning is best. That which is churned after sunrise is not so good," made an indelible impression on his mind. This impression was deepened by contact with a friend who was in intimate touch with the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission. A new aspiration was waking in the depths of his being and moving gradually towards the surface. It broke through one night when he had a dream that stirred him to the innermost recesses of his soul. It was more a vision than a dream; and for ten or twelve days after, the world about him seemed the dream and his vision the reality. At times he staggered like a drunken man; and so abstracted was he from his surroundings, so changed in manner and appearance that the family thought his mind had become affected. They could not understand how one who had always been

so tender-hearted could suddenly grow cold and indifferent to family, friends, games, to all that had been dear to him.

The call had come and Suresh answered. As the saying had counselled, he would give himself in the freshness of the early morning of his youth. With unsuspecting frankness he carried his decision to his father and eldest brother, believing they would rejoice with him. Instead, they met him with firm opposition. They tried coaxing and scolding; they even set a watch on him to prevent him from leaving secretly; but the call to renunciation continued to sound; and when a few months later the opportunity opened, he went.

There was no elaboration of preparation, no formal announcement, no seeking consent. He slipped away quietly, telling only one member of the family, who wept bitterly over his going, yet dared not intrude on the sanctity of his new consecration by an appeal to stay. He went straight to the head monastery of the Ramakrishna Mission at Belur on the Ganges, three miles above Calcutta. When he asked to be admitted, a hot discussion rose among the members of the Order. Some thought the boy was too young; others suggested that it might create trouble if they accepted a minor; others begged to keep him. Suresh listened in patient silence, but he felt deep content in his heart when Swami Vivekananda checked all further argument by declaring: "I will take the full responsibility. The boy shall stay."

(Chap. V. "Life as a Brahmacharin" will appear in January number.)

Adoration to that Adorable One who endows all beings with consciousness, who is the soul of the universe, the seed of the cosmos, the Supreme Lord. Let us meditate on Him. —*Srimad Bhagavatam.*

ASHRAMA CLOISTER

By Sister Daya

On the afternoon of November second at half past three o'clock Ashrama Cloister was dedicated. Only those who knew the Ashrama a year and a half ago when Swami Paramananda first acquired it can have any conception of the months of concentrated labor which lay back of this event. It would be very difficult to convey by written word the blossoming of a flower, all the little subtle, delicate changes which made the full bloom possible. Just as difficult is it to give a mental picture of the gradual growth and change in a place like the Ashrama. In truth the new has supplanted the old so gradually and so naturally that even those who have been associated with the Ashrama from the beginning find themselves forgetting how it looked when the pretty walled garden above the parking place was a briar-choken chicken-run and the attractive grey cottage which it shelters with its graceful pepper trees stood below,—an ugly, dingy habitation. The road that connects the driveway with the lower cabins seems always to have been there, and the lower cabins themselves beneath their oak trees make one forget that morning when the Swami struggled through thick undergrowth to explore the wild little canyon where they now stand. As for the main building, kodak pictures alone remind us of its gradual evolution.

In the beginning this attractive low-lying, red-tiled house, suggestive of southern Europe, gave shelter to the first comers, providing chapel and lecture hall, and in fact making the immediate beginning of public work possible. The arrival of more workers taxed its capacity to the utmost and soon it became necessary to expand. The cabins of "cabin row" were built on the hill slope above the garage and when even these became inadequate the lower cabins were con-

structed. But at best these arrangements were but temporary and entirely insufficient. The great need was a unified dwelling place for the consecrated workers. Ashrama Cloister has been built to supply that need.

Last spring at a Sunday Service, the Swami called for architectural suggestions. In response a well-known architect of Pasadena who was among the congregation came to the Swami with an offer of service. Plans were quickly made for an extension to the original house. An addition to a house is generally ungainly, but not so in this case. Even though the house is of stucco and the cloister of rough-hewn stone, there is no sense of disharmony. The cloister grows out of the house quite naturally in the form of two wings which are closed at the back by a third wing forming a spacious patio with arcaded walks and a pergola. The east wing extends beyond so that only by making a tour of the building can one realize its full extent. The park-like beauty of the site has in nowise been marred. On one side tall eucalyptus trees bend over the roof as though planted by an artist hand; on the other side stately young deodars show forth their fresh green against the background of grey rock wall which looks as though it had been built in the days when builders were artists, and labored for the approval of the centuries, for beauty and endurance rather than for money. A tree or two had to be sacrificed, but so cleverly was the building planned that it winds its way among the greenery as though the trees had been planted in relation to it. Mulberry, locust with a rare violet bloom, Norwegian spruce, a grevilia, a dainty flowering pear, and two banana plants give the charm of foliage to the interior of the patio. In the northeast corner stands a natural bower from the shade of which the Swami conducted the first public service at the Ashrama, and from which he spoke on the afternoon of the dedication.

None who sat there that afternoon listening to him while their eyes rested on the purple sweep of the mother mountains showing above the red tiled roof, could have imagined that even a few hours before, that morning even, the flagstone walls were still unfinished, the grilled doors at the patio's arched gateways still unhung. Everything about the building gave a sense of harmony and order, of beauty and completion. It was a summer sun that drew the fragrance from the hills and threw its glint upon the out-door altar. Garlands of oak and the wild cherry were hung from the columns of the cloister. At the south end of the patio the great glass doors of the new dining-room, through which one enters the original building, were thrown wide to give more seating space. It was no ordinary Sunday congregation that assembled. Ever the motors kept coming, undaunted by distance or mountain road, till at least five hundred people had gathered and were comfortably seated in the patio. There were those who came, perhaps, expecting an unusual or exotic ceremonial; instead they found simplicity itself and the vibrant living spirit. New buildings there are a-plenty, and of ceremonies there are no end, but the spirit of true dedication is not met with every day. It was in that spirit that the Swami spoke.

"Dedication of a place," he said, "can only be accomplished with a sense of spiritual presence. We can build castles and churches and magnificent places, but sometimes they are cold and lifeless. No place becomes of great interest or great benefit to people unless it is a living thing, and we make a place living by our own life, our own love, our own interest in humanity. There are people who can go aloof, away from the world and give themselves to meditation and higher thinking. Perhaps they can find peace. It is far easier to find peace when we go away; that is, if we have the

understanding, but it is far greater when we can forget ourselves in the thought of others and that is what I call true dedication and consecration. Not what we get from people, but how much we are able to give, that is the leading spirit of our work. We have gathered here a band of consecrated workers, not working because we want something for ourselves, but working here because we believe in the power of this ideal. Suppose we stand alone, that does not make any difference; it only makes us stronger. Whenever we stand alone with any ideal, that means that it is deeply rooted, and that is the theme of my address to you."

These words are but a fragment of what the Swami said, but they give the soul of his utterance, the living quality which he conveys to other hearts. Music helped to create this atmosphere. Some of the Swami's own poems harmonized by a devoted friend were sung by one of the household, while a Russian member sang two Russian hymns full of Slavic yearning and intensity. As a final benediction clouds and mountains were turned to gold and pure amethyst by the setting sun so that on their homeward way people faced a glory of light and color.

The Tuesday following, the Ashrama again gave warm welcome to its friends in its more social aspect,—a reception in honor of the new Cloister. "We want people to come to the Ashrama," the Swami explained, "for their recreation as well as for their spiritual study. The spiritual life must be a well-balanced life." He forthwith introduced the artists of the afternoon, some talented members who kept the audience between laughter and tears for an hour or more. Then as the evening chill crept down the canyons, dining-room and living-room were thrown open and all were invited to warm themselves by the open fires and share in the refreshments the Swami had prepared with his own

hand. That night rain fell and continued to fall on and off for some days, so even the weather gods smiled on the Ashrama. Until the time comes for the building of the auditorium, the Service on Sunday will be held in the new patio when the weather is fair.

CREATIVE POWER OF SILENCE

Review in Vedanta Kesari, Madras, India

The torch which the late Swami Vivekananda so assiduously lit in the U. S. A. is now burning steadily with ever-increasing radiance, carrying illumination and enlightenment to a region where they are most needed. The Vedanta Centre at Boston has been familiarising the American public with the ancient truths of India through that band of devoted selfless Sannyasins of the Sri Ramakrishna Order of which Swami Paramananda is one of the shining lights. Students of the Vedanta are already familiar with the Swami's earlier writings, "Plato and Vedic Idealism," "Reincarnation and Immortality," "Spiritual Healing" and others, and have learned to associate with his writings profundity of thought and spiritual balance.

In the volume of illuminative essays before us, the Swami has given us heart to heart talks on spiritual attainment and reveals himself as a true mystic. The rush, the turmoil and the hurry of modern life leave us little time to realize that life has a secret which does not merely lie on the surface. As a recent writer has aptly put it, man is an immortal being clad in a garb of flesh, which is vivified and moved by desires and passions and which he links to himself by a thread of his immortal nature. This thread is the mind and this mind, unsubdued and inconstant wanders out among the things of the earth, is moved by passions and desires, hopes and fears, and deafened by the tumults of its

surroundings. Swami Paramananda has shown how peace of mind can be attained, which is by a systematic disciplined practice of silence, which again creates an atmosphere and enables the seeker to find access to the inner sanctuary hidden from the restless and turbulent material world. He has taken care to guard at the outset against the popular delusion of confounding the idea of silence with inaction, for the aim of silence is not to free our mind from thought and assume a state of emptiness and passivity. On the contrary silence born of a peaceful, restful mind becomes a definite factor for efficient and concentrated thought. One may shut himself in the forests' untrammelled depths, and yet not obtain the state of quiescence if his mind is noisy and has not learned to identify itself with the true instead of with the apparent self. This state of mind has to be sedulously cultivated by devoting a certain time daily to silent relaxation. Just as the physical body recoupes its vitality by rest, the mind recoupes its vitality by silence. Or, as the Swami beautifully puts it, what sleep does for the body and the nervous system, that silence does for our mind and spirit. The practice of physical rest restores our body and sense organs, while the practice of mental rest—silence —restores our mind.

We are all familiar with the old adage, "a sound mind in a sound body." If a healthy body produces a healthy mind, there is something which a healthy mind produces the value of which is equally great. I mean a healthy heart, which is the best shrine man can create for the Supreme. One who is yearning for spiritual perfection should needs be a votary in this shrine by a practice of habitual, faithful devotion. Then only shall he realize that the purpose of life is to fulfill the will of God. The Swami's essays deserve to be carefully read and thought over by all students of the Vedanta.

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